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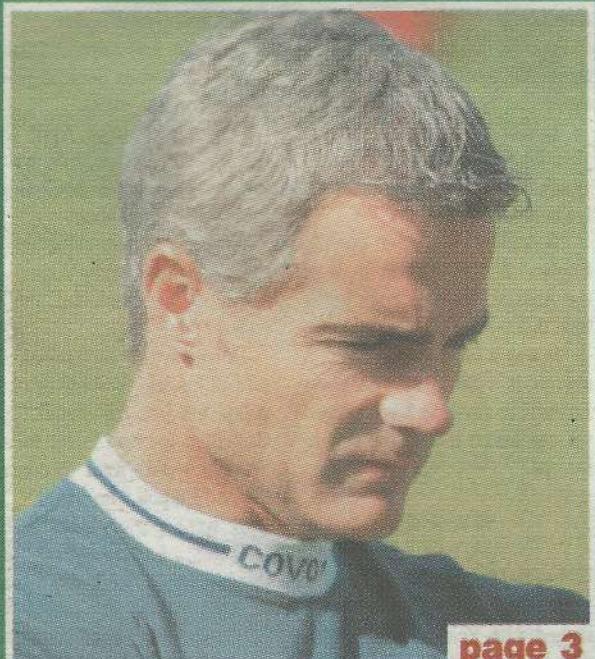
ROO-DUE



England's last great bastion over its colonies has now all but been destroyed following the defeat of its football team by the Australian Socceroos.

Last week's historic three-one defeat at Upton Park was the first time an international match between the two sides had been played within the United Kingdom and the first time in six attempts that relative minnows Australia had beaten their greater known and more experienced hosts.

By Daniel Kuzlow page 3



page 3

Phillips out!

A.P.I.A. Youth Meets Grella and Kalac

By John Economos
(From Empoli, Italy)

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers' Youth Squad currently touring Italy to participate in the 55th Viareggio Youth Tournament, were special guests at Empoli's home match against Serie A side Perugia last Sunday which ended in a 1-1 draw.

This match involved two Australian Internationals, midfielder Vince Grella for the home side and towering goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac for Perugia.

After the match both Grella and Kalac came out of their respective dressing rooms to meet the A.P.I.A. Youth players and spent more than half an hour with them talking and having souvenir photos taken with them.

Grella who told ABSW he had just

signed a new three year contract with Empoli, laughed when we asked him what he thought about Australia's "friendly" against England last Wednesday night: "Australia does not play friendlies against England and never should," he smiled.

Meanwhile, Kalac told ABSW he had another two years left on his contract and that the club wanted him to extend it now.

Kalac who is 29-years-old, also told ABSW that before he retires he wants to come back to Australia and play for a season or two in the NSL.

Both Grella and Kalac appeared very happy to see warm, friendly Australian faces in the A.P.I.A. Youth squad.

Yesterday A.P.I.A.'s squad attended the Viareggio Opening Ceremony at the Dei Pini Stadium where the official guest was Italian World Cup right midfielder Angelo



DiLivio.

A.P.I.A.'s first Tournament match is on Wednesday 1.00am (aest) against Serie B side Cosenza to be played at Arezzo. A.P.I.A.'s second

match is against Serie A side Reggina on Thursday and the last match is on Saturday against Serie A side Napoli, to be played at Siena.

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F.L. Press
118-124 Bourke Rd,
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TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9690 7159

(advertising)
John Economos
Tel: (02) 9744 6984
Ben Moring
Tel: 0438 849 053
or
Tel: (02) 9690 7159

E-MAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)

ABSW's E-mail:
soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9310 4425

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118-124 Bourke Rd,
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SUBSCRIPTIONS
Sylvia Marinos
Phone: (02) 9690 7100
Australia: \$195 (GST incl.)
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EDITOR
Mark Stavroulakis
STAFF WRITER
Daniel Kuziow

LAYOUT/TYPESETTING
Mary Quarty, Alamita Vea
PICTURE EDITOR
Carlos Furtado

CORRESPONDENTS
Alan Clark (Victoria)
Allan Crisp (Adelaide)
Glenn Davis (Brisbane)
Otto Bader (Wollongong)
Richard Kreider (Perth)
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SCANNING

Bill Hawthorn
FILE PLANNING
Nick Philips
PHOTOGRAPHY
Getty Images

DISTRIBUTION
NSW/ACT:
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Alexandria NSW 2015,
Tel: (02) 9690 7100

VICTORIA:
FLP Pty Ltd. 72-78 Gipps Street,
Collingwood Vic 3066
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Tel: (03) 9486 9858

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AUSSIES ABROAD

BY DANIEL KUZIOW

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Luton boss Joe Kinnear has put his move for Notts County striker Danny Allsopp on hold after the Australian ace picked up an injury.

Allsopp picked up a hamstring injury in County's defeat to Mansfield and is expected to be out of action for three weeks.

Kinnear had hoped to take advantage of Notts County's precarious financial position by luring Allsopp away from Meadow Lane.

The Hatters manager is keen to strengthen his attack and he has switched his attentions to another mystery striker.

"I spoke to the boy's agent here this morning. He left about 10 minutes ago. We discussed one or two things and started the ball rolling but it's very complicated because the boy's still under contract to his club," Kinnear told the club's official

website. "But the boy got injured on Saturday so that's knocked it on the head for at least three weeks. I won't be getting anyone that's injured."

"I always felt that this would drag so I've got someone else in mind who I might be able to get in for Northampton from a club that's in the First Division."

"I don't want to talk too much about it but I'll find out later today."

"I've spoken to the club and it's whether the boy wants to drop down to this league. It would be a loan but it could turn out to be permanent."

However reports later in the week have indeed suggested the apparent talk of transfer is a hoax with a Notts County spokesman saying: "We've received no bids and haven't heard anything from Luton at all."

★★★★★

Stan Lazaridis admits time is not on the side of Birmingham's new signings as Blues battle to avoid relegation at the end of the season.

Steve Bruce's transfer frenzy during January saw him bring in six new players at a cost of around £7m but getting that many players to fit into the team's style of play will be a tall order. But while it is far from easy, Aussie winger Lazaridis does admit that having more players to choose from is a boost for Bruce, considering the number of different injury and suspension problems he has endured this season.

"I don't think the manager has really been in a position this season where he could really put out the fully fit XI that he wanted," Lazaridis told Teamtalk.com.

"We have had problems with injuries and suspensions. Now we have got some new players who have come in and it takes time for them to settle but we do not have that time. So it has been a bit of a mixed last four weeks and it has been hard for the manager but in saying that we have to get on with our season."

★★★★★

Rangers defender Craig Moore admits he is determined to finish his career at Ibrox.

The Australian international is the club's longest-serving player, having arrived in Glasgow 10 years ago as a 17-year-old youth player - and he insists he has no intention of leaving.

He told Rangers News: "At the moment I'm very, very settled - but I have been for many years. "So I do feel that I'll end up finishing my career at Rangers."

"I love playing football here and I never take anything for granted because you never know what's around the corner."

"I know things have not always gone smoothly for me in Glasgow, particularly early in my career, and I've had to come through a lot of tough times, but that's made me a stronger person in the end."

"It's always been my aim to play at the highest level and I just want to keep being successful at Rangers."

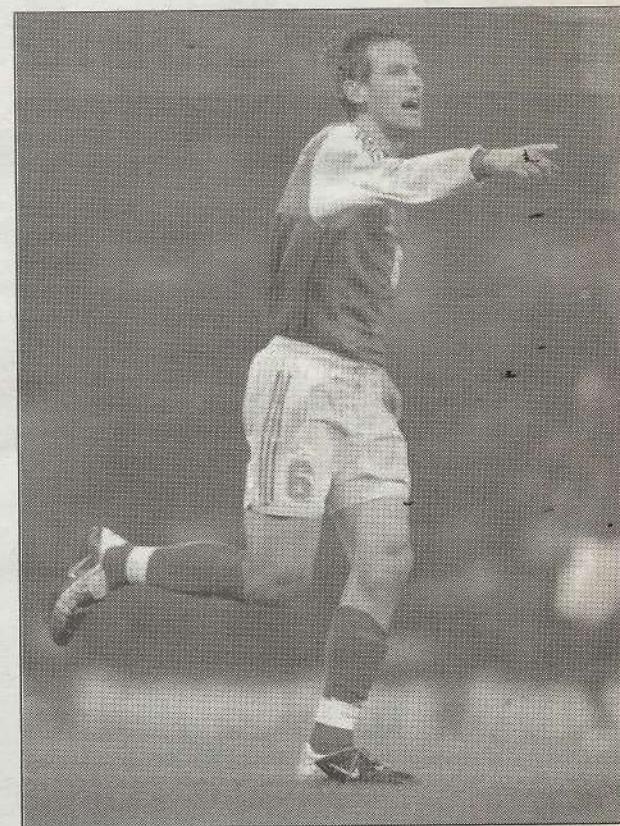
"It's important to be professional and I want to go out and win as many trophies as I can here."

★★★★★

Cardiff have turned down the opportunity to sign Australian trialist Antonio Naglieri.

The 19-year-old midfielder, released by Australian club Perth Glory last month, spent a fortnight at Ninian Park after paying his own airfare to Wales.

But he did not do enough to impress Cardiff boss Lennie Lawrence, who has recently bolstered his squad with the signings of Alan Mahon and Steve Jenkins.



Tony Popovic: The Socceroo hero missed the fifth round FA Cup-tie against Leeds United due to an ongoing groin injury.

★★★★★

Skarouka leaves for France this Sunday and will stay at the club's facilities called the Centre of Formation which is at the stadium where all young hopefuls lodge and has been asked to play in the Gambarella Cup, an U18 tournament held in France every year when he arrives.

Once he turns 18 his contract turn will turn professional, but his education has also been provided to him with all costs taken care of by the club.

Skarouka has attained a kit sponsor 'One-nil' who will support him his attire.

★★★★★

Empoli midfieler Vince Grella has admitted he is being tracked by Serie A giants Milan and Juventus.

"From now until April they (Milan) will basically be watching me 24 hours a day," Grella told planetfootball.com

"I played a great game against them which probably helped and obviously I left a good impression on them."

However, the 23-year-old star said all his efforts would be channelled towards the Stadio Carlo Castellani for now." But for the moment I only want to concentrate on Empoli," he added.

"I have played well against Juventus, Lazio, Milan and Internazionale so I don't have anybody to fear."

"On the other hand I could go to Milan and never play because of the size of their squad so I will just try and do my best for Empoli."

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Fairfield Bulls defender Chris Skarouka has signed with French Second Div club Stade Malherbe Caen until the end of next year.

The move comes after the 17-year-old impressed at trials organised by his agent Danny Hinnbrechts.

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ROO BASH

SOCEROOS HUMBLE ENGLAND

By Daniel Kuziow

The Socceroos have sensationally defeated England by three goals to one in their historic international friendly played at Upton Park last week.

It is the first victory for the Socceroos over England in six attempts in what was their first ever appearance on English soil in a full international.

First half goals from centre back Tony Popovic; superstar Harry Kewell all but plunged the Poms into the doldrums while effectively sealing the game for the much under rated Australian lineup. Feyenoord's Brett Emerton rounded off the scoring with a goal in the late stages of the match but not before Francis Jeffers had nodded England back into the game with a goal on 69 minutes.

It was Kewell, the centre of much controversy before the match however that stole the headlines. The subject of intense debate over his troublesome hamstring between his club Leeds United and his nation of birth, Kewell turned in a sublime

Australia	3
(Popovic 16', Kewell 42', Emerton 83')		
England	1
(Jeffers 67')		

AUSTRALIA: Mark Schwarzer (gk), Lucas Neill, Tony Popovic (Tony Vidmar 67'), Craig Moore, Stan Lazaridis, Brett Emerton, Paul Okon (Kevin Muscat 87'), Josip Skoko (Marco Bresciano 46'), Scott Chipperfield (Vince Grella 73'), Harry Kewell (John Aloisi 57'), Mark Viduka (Mile Sterjovski 84').
Yellow Cards: Stan Lazaridis

ENGLAND: 1-David James; 2-Gary Neville, 5-Rio Ferdinand, 6-Sol Campbell, 3-Ashley Cole; 7-David Beckham (captain), 8-Paul Scholes, 4-Frank Lampard, 11-Kieron Dyer, 9-James Beattie, 10-Michael Owen.
Subs: D Murphy for F Lampard (45), O Hargreaves for D Beckham (45), J Jenas for P Scholes (45), D Vassell for K Dyer (45), W Brown for R Ferdinand (45), D Mills for G Neville (45), P Robinson for D James (45), L King for S Campbell (45), P Konchesky for A Cole (45), W Rooney for M Owen (45), F Jeffers for J Beattie (45).

performance with a goal to worthy of his world class reputation.

Just before half time, Blackburn Rovers defender Lucas Neill won possession on the right hand touchline, and with the minimum amount of space available threaded a pass into the England defensive half. Wrestling the ball off highly rated defender Rio Ferdinand, Kewell raced in towards goal before shimmying past the on-rushing David James to caress the ball

into the open net. Australia started brightly and deservedly took the lead after 15 minutes through Crystal Palace defender Tony Popovic. Peeling away from marker Gary Neville, Popovic met a Stan Lazaridis free kick and neatly planted his header to the far post.

Almost immediately England's Paul Scholes produced the ball past goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer, however the goal was disallowed by Spanish referee Manuel Enrique Mejuto.

Other first half chances fell to the Socceroos, the best of which being a Mark Viduka looping header that forced James to back peddle and tip the ball over the crossbar into a spectacular save, while Basel midfielder Scott Chipperfield made a great run in from the left hand side to meet an Emerton cross, only for English defender Gary Neville to nudge his shot just past the post.

Despite the 2-0 half-time scoreline England coach Sven Goran Eriksson true to his word changed his entire 11 players at then half time interval and Arsenal youngster Jeffers pulled a goal back for the home side with just over 20 minutes remaining.

A cross from the right hand side was swung into the near post by Jermaine Jenas and with Jeffers timing his run to perfection nodded past Schwarzer who was left with



Lucas Neill tussles with Kieron Dyer.



Harry Kewell evades the attention of both Paul Scholes and Rio Ferdinand.

no chance in the Socceroos goal.

But the Socceroos rounded out a wonderful night with five minutes remaining. Substitute John Aloisi broke away from his marker Ledley King and holding him off, he threaded a pass to the on rushing Emerton and playing it first time poked the ball through Paul Robinson's legs

to end the scoring.

"It was a fantastic night for everyone," said Socceroo coach Frank Farina.

"That was one of the best first halves we've played. We scored two and created several more chances and in the second half, apart from a 15-minute period, we looked comfortable and scored another good goal."

"Harry was exceptional and proved what a world class player he is."

"Stan Lazaridis I thought had a fantastic game, but overall there was not a bad player on the night. They worked hard for each other and the defence was very solid all night," concluded Farina.



Tony Popovic heads past David James for the games opener.

A Hidden Jewel in the Nations Capital

By Mark Stavroulakis

Tucked away beneath the quiet and serene city of Canberra is a development factory that for years has progressed and promoted a number of talented young footballers.

The Australian Institute of Sport has been the hunting ground for many talented athletes from across the country in various sporting codes.

One such program and sport that has benefited greatly from this unique program that was established back in 1981 has been the soccer department.

It's been no secret as to what success this program had on the world game here in this country.

When you look at all Australian levels starting from the young U17 Joeys - U20 Young Socceroos - U23 Olyroos and finally our senior side the Socceroos, there have been a number of players that have gone through the AIS system.

The historical institute has outlined two main objectives upon which they work towards performing a particular task.

1) To identify and develop outstanding young talent for the National U20 youth team with possible progression to the Olympic and Senior Socceroo squads.

2) To develop coaches through the National Coaching Scheme.

In terms of competition, the AIS has been involved in the Northern National Youth League and has done quite well in recording many credible achievements since its induction in 1981.

At the end of the day, winning championships and medals isn't the main aim on an institute level but it's more on how many quality players develop well and move onto the next phase.

Apart from taking part in the National Youth League, the AIS have had the luxury of taking part in various tournaments held across the globe.

Holland, Canada, USA, South America, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, the UK and Italy have all been countries visited by the AIS through time.

These tournaments are used to show the Australian youngster what he's up against in terms of overseas players.

In this day and age, many youngsters are waiting on hands and knees in the hope of securing a move to an overseas club, knowing what their up against will always benefit their development towards the top.

The main man that is currently pulling the strings as the Institutes developer is coach Steve O'Connor.

'Rocks' as he is known to all his players has been head-coach of the AIS since 1996 after succeeding the father of the AIS Football program Ronny Smith.

An ex-player, O'Connor made 289 National League appearances and represented Australia at senior level 46 times so his ability of having played the round ball game is second to none.

Through time, O'Connor has watched and developed elite youngsters from across Australia mould into professional footballers currently playing their trades in Europe and for the Socceroos.

Of the 200-plus average players who have graduated from the AIS Soccer Program, 97 have gone on to play for



The Socceroo trio of Kevin Muscat (left), John Aloisi (centre) and Mark Viduka (right) all came through the famous AIS system.

Some of the many graduates that have passed through the AIS:

- Mark Rudan
- Goran Lozanovski
- Jason Van Blerk
- Warren Spink
- Andrew Bernal
- Jason Polak
- Paul Foster
- Dominic Longo
- Lorenz Kindtner
- Vince Kalogeracos
- Kevin Muscat
- Ante Milicic
- Steve Corica
- Frank Juric
- Lucas Neill
- Josip Simunic
- Michael Curcija
- Zelko Susa
- Tynan Scope
- Eddie Bosnar
- Con Blatsis
- Stephen Laybutt
- Andrew McDermott
- Vince Grella
- Marco Bresciano
- Simon Colosimo
- Brett Emerton
- Mile Sterjovski
- Luke Wilkshire
- Michael Ferrante
- Ljubo Milicevic
- Ivan Ergic
- Matt Kemp
- Joshua Kennedy
- Matthew Engele
- Nathan Coe
- Carl Valeri
- Frank Farina
- Ned Zelic
- Hayden Foxe
- Danny Milosevic
- Lou Hristodoulou
- Alistair Edwards
- David Clarkson
- Craig Moore

Australia in youth internationals, 36 have represented the Olyroos and 28 have played for the Socceroos.

This statistic itself explains how important this institute is and has been to this country in terms of promoting young Australian talent for quite some time.

It has however been somewhat of a disappointment of late to hear that a number of National League clubs have shunned this wonderful program down in the nation's capital.

A 'Jewel' is the term used of what this Institute really is has however been devalued by a few critics in past months.

The recent issue involving two Wollongong Wolves Youth players not being allowed to pursue their developing careers by signing on with the AIS has caused quite a stir in the soccer fraternity.

Youngsters Dezi Giraldo and Justin Pasfield were both awarded scholarships at the AIS this season but under unbelievable circumstances were not allowed to go by the club.

It's simply not right to see clubs mis-

treat a program such as this that for so long has benefited this country.

The Federal Minister of the Arts and Sport Senator Rod Kemp best said what the AIS meant to Australia at last year's AIS soccer launch in Canberra.

"The AIS is regarded throughout the world as being at the forefront of elite athlete development and the Institute's soccer program has played a significant role in building that reputation", stated Kemp.

In the recent light of the Socceroos magnificent victory over the English in London last week, many doors and avenues were opened for more young Aussie's hoping to make the trek overseas.

Another alarming statistic coming from the match itself was the amount of AIS graduates that represented the green and gold who had opened this gate up for future young Australian soccer players.

Kevin Muscat, Lucas Neill, Vince Grella, Marco Bresciano, Brett Emerton, Mile Sterjovski, Craig Moore, John Aloisi, Mark Viduka, Josip Skoko and even coach Frank Farina all came through

the AIS ranks.

Going down a level, the U23 Olyroo squad that assembled for last year's friendly clash in July against touring Chilean side Colo Colo had nine players that had gone through the system.

The current U20 Young Socceroo squad who are bound for Dubai next month currently have nine players that have gone through the program while the new Joey stars currently playing in the Oceania qualifiers has three that are currently on the books of the AIS.

Results and records speak for itself, this program has worked wonders in Australia and has surely put this country on the map in terms of development.

Known as a 'gold-mine' to many soccer experts in this country, the current factory in Canberra is currently unearthing more future talents for the benefit of this country.

The scary factor about this particular issue is that the program and its players only get better as time progresses.



Socceroo coach Frank Farina was on-top of the world after their three-one win over the English last week.

Farina lauds London win.

Basking in the glory of his team's stunning victory over England at Upton Park, Socceroos coach Frank Farina is hanging around London in the hope of tying up a deal that will allow his team to call the capital home.

While the 3-1 victory over David Beckham and Co. didn't provide Australia with any points towards the ultimate quest, to qualify for the 2006 World Cup, it has convinced Farina that London is the perfect place to base future matches for the national team.

"There were close to 4000 Aussies here tonight and they were sensational," Farina told the *Herald Sun*.

"We've got a ready-made support base with the number of expats based here."

Farina will stay in London in the hope of holding talks with the English Football Association who he hopes to convince to give Soccer Australia permission to stage future home matches in the capital.

First Division Watford's Vicarage Road ground is the latest in a long list of possible venues being touted for the potential base along with the likes of Tottenham's White Hart Lane, Arsenal's Highbury, Chelsea's Stamford Bridge, Charlton's The Valley and Upton Park, home of West Ham.

"For me, when you talk of venues such as Chelsea or Watford or West Ham, they're all great facilities," Farina said.

"First things first and that is to get the English FA accepting us establishing a base here."

The Socceroos coach is confident the victory over England will reap rewards for Australian soccer far beyond the football pitch.

"The mileage we'll get out of this win in terms of promotion of the game will be enormous."

"In terms of importance, it's a wonderful start to our preparation for 2006, and hopefully it will enable us to get games against some of the better teams going round the world."

"Credibility is what the lesser countries strive for."

"To beat England in England and to do it so convincingly will help in giving us credibility, not only for Australia but Oceania overall."

Farina also revealed that he witnessed first hand, the devastation in the England camp.



National League Round 22 Reports



Marconi Stallions



Newcastle United

Young Newcastle steal points from Stallions

A depleted Newcastle United hung on grimly to defeat Marconi last Friday night in the NSL clash at Marconi Stadium.

A 10th minute goal to Travis Dodd secured the three points for United, who have leapfrogged South Melbourne into third spot on the NSL ladder - at least for tonight - with South to play Melbourne Knights on Sunday.

Nine regular first graders were absent from the United outfit, with striker Joel Griffiths (ankle) sorely missed up front while Esala Masi and Scott Thomas were out suspended.

The last-placed Stallions had numerous chances to grab an equaliser in the second half but some dogged defending and a string of fine saves by goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame kept them scoreless.

Both sides produced a woeful display in the first half, particularly Marconi with Dodd's goal the only highlight.

Mitchell Johnson stole the ball from former Socceroo Luke Casserly and fed it to an unmarked Dodd, who had little trouble beating keeper Michael Turnbull.

The only real chance for the Stallions came in the 29th minute when Beltrame fumbled and regathered a fierce Shane Webb shot.

Coach Rale Rasic hauled off midfielder Casserly, signed by

the club a fortnight ago following a three-season stint in Sweden, in the 32nd minute and replaced him with Robert Enes.

The match then turned a little ugly, with referee Brett Hugo handing out four yellow cards in the final ten minutes of the half.

Marconi's Tony Sekulic was lucky to escape a second booking and a red card for a rugby-style tackle on Ryan Griffiths shortly after the break.

Beltrame produced two excellent saves within the space of a minute, repelling a Sekulic piledriver in the 64th minute and a Joe Spiteri header.

Spiteri had another opportunity to equalise in the 72nd minute but his shot from well inside the box went left of the posts.

With just two minutes of regular time remaining, Young



Newcastle United's Travis Dodd bagged his side's only goal in their win over bottom placed Marconi Stallions last Friday night.



Parramatta Power

7



Football Kingz

0

POWER SEND KINGZ FOR SEVEN

By Joe Russo

A few weeks ago it was a 7-0 scoreline against the Marconi Stallions and on Saturday night it was more of the same for the Auckland-based Kingz FC when they took on Parramatta Power at home.

Both games were similar; Power completely outplayed the opposition that simply had no answers. After two consecutive defeats the Power let their NSL rivals know that they were back.

It was a comprehensive trouncing and any comments

about the poor quality opposition that the Kingz provided should not take away from the magnificent Parramatta Power display.

The Power on their day are capable of beating any opposition and, under the astute tutelage of Nick Theodorakopoulos and his trusty coaching staff, they are an outfit which looks certain to reach the playoffs for the first time in their brief history. And once there anything can happen.

For the Auckland-based Kingz FC it is curtains for the season. Ken Dugdale's team will merely go through the motions and be of nuisance value for their opponents until the end of the season.

Kosta Salapasidis was the star of this game but he was ably supported by Johnny Buonavoglia and Matthew Thompson in particular. However, the whole Power team really deserves special praise.

Theodorakopoulos' team selections proved to be a masterstroke. Pablo Cardozo and Thompson were preferred instead of Brad Maloney and Peter Zorbas and in the end the duo handsomely rewarded their coach's faith.

Salapasidis seems to have found a new lease of life this season under Theodorakopoulos. His association with his coach goes back to when they were both at Kallithea, a then Second Division Greek club, two years ago.

Salapasidis is a former Australian Youth international who hit the headlines for his four goals against Argentina in Australia's 4-3 victory over the

South Americans at the 1997 FIFA Under 20 World Youth Cup in Malaysia.

Since then his career has stalled until joining Parramatta Power this season. His hat trick of goals in the second half, in the 52nd, 58th and 80th minutes, ensured that the New Zealand visitors went home with a hiding.

It was exactly what the Kingz FC deserved for they were awful especially in the second half.

Parramatta Power opened the scoring with Thompson in the 10th minute and the ever-alert Buonavoglia doubled their lead in the 21st minute. The half-time scoreline of 2-0 flattered the Kingz because the Power squandered at least another three goalscoring opportunities prior to the break.

In the second stanza of play Buonavoglia scored his second in the 47th minute and then in quick succession Salapasidis scored a brace to make the score 5-0.

It was Cardozo in the 71st minute who made it a tennis score of 6-0 and then Salapasidis rounded off the scoring with ten minutes to play.

The only negative for Parramatta Power remains the lack of spectators. Sydney's poor weather may have contributed slightly on the night but poor crowds are a regular feature of their home games.

This team has yet to conquer the hearts and minds of fans in Sydney's Western Suburbs despite the first class facility of Parramatta Stadium.

The numerous local schools should be flooded with free tickets and the \$15 general admission ticket price should be slashed. The players and coaching staff deserve a bigger and better audience and the marketing department needs to be thinking along the same lines.



Power striker Kosta Salapasidis bagged a hat-trick in Parramatta's seven-nil thumping of the hapless Football Kingz.

Adelaide City Force

2

Sydney United

0

By Allan Crisp

Pelosi Magic spurs Force Win

A slice of luck and a magnificent free kick presented Adelaide City Force with the points it desperately needed to snare this 2-0 win over Sydney United at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday night.

With Goran Lozanovski, Aurelio Vidmar, Lucas Pantelis, Carl Veart and Matthew Kemp at the peak of their form, City ran roughshod over the struggling United.

But slick team work and dominance did not translate to goals in a frustrating first half

until United veteran David Barrett made an uncharacteristic mistake to present poacher Claudio Pelosi with his eighth goal of the season.

Barrett looked to have a cross from City captain Ante Kovacevic covered, but clipped the ball into the path of Pelosi.

Until that 43rd minute breakthrough, giant Sydney goalkeeper Vanja Ivesa had kept his team in the game with some top flight, if at times unorthodox, glove work.

It was fitting that man-of-the-match Lozanovski should have the final say when the former Australian international curled a superb free kick from the edge of the box past the biggest man in the NSL. Lozanovski, who has been bending the ball before Beckham conquered the



Adelaide Force's Italian import Claudio Pelosi stole the show with a goal and a brilliant performance that all but assured a top six finish for the black and white's.

Socceroo Alex Brosque put in a neat cross for Spiteri but his striking partner could not get a foot to the ball.

United coach Ian Crook and Rasic both rained praise on Beltrame.

"I don't think there's a better keeper in the league," Crook said.

"He's been great for us for two years and you can count on one hand how many goals have been his fault."

Rasic, when questioned about Marconi's lack of intensity, said in a gentle dig at Crook's nationality: "We played like England."

"You must give United credit. They were inferior on paper but they fought incredibly well and fighting qualities win the game and goalkeeping."

Rasic was hard on Casserly, whose mistake ultimately cost his side the match.

"There's no excuse when you're dealing with experienced players," he said.

art, could not have provided a more appropriate finale to the match, with the goal coming in the 93rd minute.

The defining free was awarded by referee Angelo Nardi for a foul by Paul Bilokapic on the ever persistent Pelosi.

Despite its lowly ranking on the league totem pole, United had its moments through the industry of central midfielder Michael Cunico and Damon Collina, while diminutive Anthony Doumanis loomed large with several speedy tilts into enemy territory.

United had its best chance to snatch a draw when Bozidar Cacic fired a bullet-like free kick from the edge of the box, but Lupce Acevski tipped the ball over his crossbar to complete an excellent save.

With Michael Valkanis and Diego Pellegrini still on the suspended list and Nick Budin injured, City coach Zoran Matic kept faith with the run-on team that downed South Melbourne in Melbourne.

Argentine import Mariano Aguero made his second successive starting appearance for the Force, but failed to make an expected impact and was replaced by David Terminello in the 65th minute.

Former Force player Louis Brain was fortunate to stay on the field when a crude tackle on Veart in the 28th minute brought only a yellow card from the referee.

"It was a very difficult game and when you get nine players behind the ball (as United had) you are not going to get a lot of chances," Matic summarised.

Co-United coach Tony Krslovic heaped praise on Pelosi declaring, "He (Pelosi) taught our defenders a lesson and the first goal was absolutely critical."

"The result was fair enough, but we had too many players down tonight."



National League Round 22 Reports



Olympic Sharks

Northern Spirit

By Peter Damalas

Spirit Send Sharks Packing

The Olympic Sharks were treated to the ultimate sucker punch by the Northern Spirit late into their Round 22 clash on Sunday evening. The home team twice threw away the lead in the closing stages of the Sydney derby at Toyota Park.

Four goals in the final ten minutes of play settled the encounter 3-2 in favour of the away side, who capitalised on the Sharks' inability to put the game away after they had opened the scoring early in the second half. The major incidents of the match were contained within this ten minute period as the Spirit netted two identical goals to equalise before captain Andrew McDermott astonished the home crowd with a sizzling free kick fully 25 metres out of goal.

For the Sharks, their lack of a killer instinct, which haunted them last week at Sydney United, again proved to be their downfall as the Spirit found themselves back in the match through the precise running of substitute Adam Kwasnik.

After Ante Milicic put Olympic ahead in the 48th minute with a penalty, the team seemed content to preserve the 1-0 lead, and spurned the chances that were created.

To their credit, Northern Spirit once again served notice of their top six intentions and punished the

defending NSL champions late in the match.

The first half was dominated by the home side, who attempted to find enough space to exploit the well organised back four.

The clash between Hiroyuki Ishida and left-back, Vuko Tomasevic, was key to the fortunes of both teams.

The link-up play of Jeremy Harris, Ante Milicic and Joel Porter was also a feature of the first half, as they tried to work their way around the Spirit backline.

Milicic had a shot in front of goal courageously blocked by Julian Watts after a fine move involving Podeljak and Ishida. A header from the same player was cleared off the post by McDermott after Porter cut back from the byline and threaded a cross through to the back post. Spirit goalkeeper Paul Henderson brought a close to the first period with a fingertip save to deny Porter in stoppage time.

In only the third minute of the second half, a penalty was awarded by referee Craig Zetter when Porter was bundled over by Tomasevic. Ante Milicic stepped up to take the penalty, and coolly slotted the ball down the centre to record his ninth goal of the 2002-2003 campaign.

Having fallen behind, the Spirit were forced to come out of their counter-attacking shell. The remainder of the match would see a tussle between two teams that were required the three points for contrasting reasons.

Olympic however fashioned very few chances and did not seem aware of the threat that the visitors possessed.

The two strikers, Harris and Milicic, were substituted, leaving Olympic without any presence in the opposition penalty box.

The Spirit were able to exploit the left side of Olympic's defence not once, but twice in the space of six minutes.

Scotsman Ian Ferguson spread the play to the right for striker Dylan Macallister, who played a simple ball across into the path of Kwasnik. The nineteen year old powerhouse chipped the diving 'keeper and stunned the home crowd with the first equaliser.

But Joel Porter, despite feeling the effects of a number of strong challenges from the opposition in the first half, reached an Ishida cross from the right inches before the byline. The midfielder managed to miraculously head the ball across goal, away from both goalkeeper and defender, and into the path of the waiting Franco Parisi, who scored the simplest of tap-ins.

However, Northern Spirit were not finished. Sensing a weakness out wide, the ball made its way to Jonathan Richter, who had only just replaced Macallister. With his first touch, Richter crossed the ball again into the path of Kwasnik, whose inspired and intelligent running created another opportunity, and he made no mistake, making the score 2-2.

Coach Gary Phillips would have been ruing the absence of his first choice wing-back, Andrew Packer, through suspension. The left hand channel had been a problem for the entire match, with Caravella and then Porter unable to fulfil both the attacking and defensive duties. Lawrie McKinna's men added a touch of ruthlessness to their game, and skipper Andrew McDermott turned the match on its head with a brilliantly taken free kick in the 90th minute. Following an innocuous challenge, McDermott caught everyone by surprise when he launched a strike on goal 25 metres out that flew into the bottom corner of the net.

The reaction of the Spirit bench told the story as the substitutes and coaching staff raced onto the pitch to congratulate their leader on a fine captain's knock.

Olympic, for their part, did not know what had hit them, and a comfortable three points was swiftly taken



Spirit's Adam Kwasnik scored two late goals in his side's three-two win over the Olympic Sharks.

from their grasp by a fiercely competitive unit.

While Phillips conceded that the minor premiership was now in the Glory's hands, he was confident in the squad's ability to bounce back for the decisive fixture in Perth.

"We are going through a bad patch at the moment, but it is a good test of character. The Perth game couldn't come at a better time for us" he said.

Victorious coach, Lawrie McKinna said "if we keep playing like that, we will be there [in the finals series]. I would have been ecstatic had we come away with a draw, but to collect the three points is unbelievable".



Wollongong Wolves



Perth Glory

Mori scores 200th goal

Perth striker Damian Mori became the first player in NSL history to reach the 200-goal milestone in the Glory's demolition of Wollongong at WIN Stadium Last Sunday night.

Mori scored Perth's second goal in the 38th minute to give the Glory a 2-1 lead.

The prolific marksman was on hand to accept a fortuitous flick from stand-in Glory captain Matt Horsley and hammer the ball into the back of the net.

Wolves keeper Andrew Crews got a hand on the powerful shot but could not keep it out.

The 32-year-old's record-breaking goal came in his 373rd NSL game.

The long retired Rod Brown, with 137 goals, is the next best goalscorer.

Mori, the former Socceroo, made his NSL debut in 1989 with Adelaide City and has since played for a number of other clubs including South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights.

With the Olympic Sharks suffering a shock 3-2 loss to Northern Spirit tonight, Perth now leads the ladder with 44 points.

Wollongong, which needed the win to stay in touch with the top six, took a shock 27th-minute lead through Shane Lyons.

Wollongong striker Alex Castro chested the ball down just outside the penalty box and Lyons unleashed a ferocious shot past keeper Jason Petkovic.

The lead was short-lived as Bobby Despotovski scored the first of his two goals four minutes later.

Despotovski did well to beat his marker, Buddy Farrah, and his shot on the turn went in off the far post.

The Glory took a 3-1 halftime lead through youngster Adrian Caceras.

Caceras, making his first start for Perth after two previous appearances as a substitute, grate-

fully tapped in a Shane Pryce cross.

The second half was more of the same for Perth.

Veteran Wolves defender David Cervinski brought down Despotovski in the box in the 53rd minute and he got up to convert the spot kick.

Caceras then rubbed it in with his third goal in as many games before substitute Nick Mrdja completed the scoring five minutes from the end.

"I'm very pleased for Damian," said Perth coach Mich d'Avray.

"I'm also pleased that he got his 200th goal tonight and it didn't drag on too long."

"If that had happened, he would have put himself under unnecessary pressure and the team would have as well."



Damian Mori created NSL history last week after notching up his 200th goal in Glory's six-one white-wash of the Wollongong Wolves.

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Rescheduled Game Round 25



South Melbourne



Brisbane Strikers

1

0

South scrapes over the line

By Alan Clark

South Melbourne took a step towards confirming a place in the Finals with a nail-biting one-nil victory over Brisbane Strikers at Bob Jane Stadium on Wednesday evening in a Round 25 game brought forward. Vaughan Coveny scored the only goal of the game just after the half-hour.

And from mid-way through the second half, Brisbane decided that the game was still in reach, mounting some deadly raids of its own that almost brought off a famous victory.

But for a last-ditch point-blank save by South goalkeeper Eugene Galekovic from Anthony Roche, a scrambled clearance off the line by Mehmet Durakovic, and then a shot from Peter Grierson which hit the underside of the bar in added time, Strikers has reasonable cause to think itself desperately unlucky in defeat.

Brisbane's Felix Tagawa was dismissed for a crude tackle on Nick Tolios just moments after Coveny's goal, leaving the Strikers a player short for the last hour of the contest.

"It was a stupid send-off. He didn't have to (react) like that," said Kosmina.

The Strikers had spotted Tagawa playing for Tahiti in the Confederations Cup and signed him for the remainder of this season. The game was brought forward four weeks because South Melbourne's Bob Jane Stadium becomes inaccessible as a result of the Formula One Grand Prix held in Albert Park. Although South had the better of the early moments, it was Brisbane which had the first serious chance of the match with just four minutes gone.

Galekovic had been compelled to gather a back-pass from Durakovic as South's defence was unable to clear the ball as Brisbane pressed, rather than fell back when the South defence had possession. Durakovic himself took responsibility to block Roche's shot after the touch from the indirect free-



Vaughan Coveny scored South Melbourne's only goal in their 1-0 victory.

kick taken from just 11 metres.

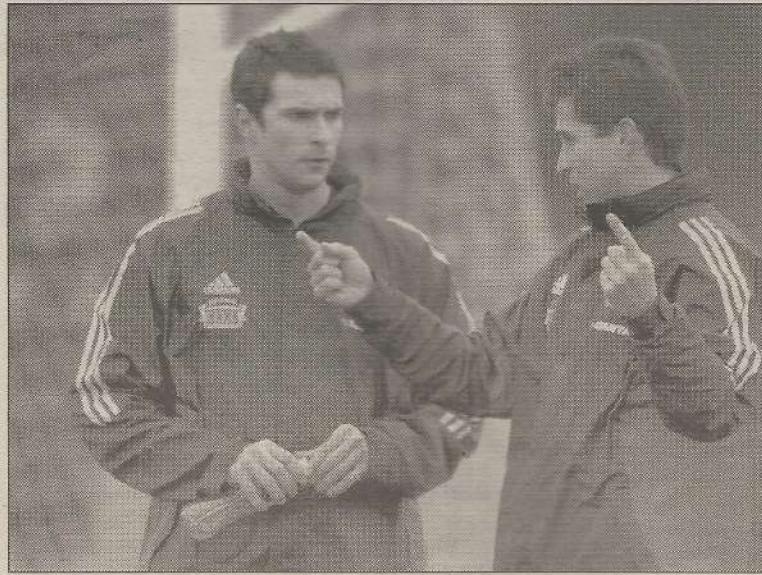
South's breakthrough came just after the half-hour. Peter Buljan had received a ball played forward and laid it off square to Coveny. The lanky Kiwi had Webber to beat and did so with a quick turn, shooting home low to Kearton's right.

What had been a reverse turned more serious just seconds later as Strikers' front-man Tagawa was dismissed for a dangerous tackle on Tolios. Referee Perry Mur - who had good control over what was at times a fierce match - instantly produced the red card to little objection. Debutant Sam Poutakidis had a bending shot from 25 metres flash by Kearton's left side post just before the half ended.

Zeljko Susa played a ball forward to Stephen Pace, and the youngster stepped inside Shane Steffanuto before sending in a shot well saved by Kearton.

The Strikers would have another cleared off the line in the last minutes when Roche's shot was saved at close-range by Galekovic, but the ball had sufficient pace to roll towards the line. Steve Iosifidis reached it at the last.

One On One with Socceroo Captain Paul Okon



Okon shown taking orders from coach Frank Farina.

Socceroo skipper Paul Okon last week took the time out in answering a few questions to Soccer Australia's Peter Smith about his up and coming year with the 'Roos and how he is fairing in English side Leeds United.

It has been a long time now since the World Cup playoff matches, are you looking forward to getting back together with the squad and appearing for the Socceroos again?

I think everyone is looking forward to that. It has been maybe a bit too long but finally this game has arrived and hopefully we will have a good few days together.

Having played in England for several years does the upcoming match hold special significance for you?

It certainly does. I think any game that

I play for Australia is special but this one will stand out. Living in this country and then having the opportunity of playing against them is great. We have been giving them a bit of stick over the cricket so now we are looking to keep the flow going.

So you are looking forward to being able to put one over some Leeds teammates?

Yes, but first and foremost it is really not about the result. This is our first game in 14 months and I think everybody will be looking at the performance.

The fact that a lot of our players are earning a living here might work in our favour or advantage.

With a 14-month absence since the team were last together, how do you think the team will combine?

I don't think that will be a major problem. Most of the guys know each other and have played with each other before. We will not go into the game favourites so in some ways we have nothing to lose.

On a personal level, you seem to have settled well into the Leeds first team recently, how has that been after a period of a year or two where injuries, etc have on-and-off kept you out of the first team?

Well firstly it is good to be in the team playing regularly. It hasn't been down to injuries - I think a lot of people like to throw that in at the end but it hasn't been down to that. It is nice to be getting a regular run and having the chance to do everything possible to stay in there.

Playing at Leeds has that helped develop on-field combinations with the other Aussie players based at Elland Rd?

Yes, it is a positive and a plus for the team, to have players within the national team playing together week-in, week-out. But in saying that, England will have similar combinations with various players.

What is your preferred playing position?

Where I am playing now with Leeds (defensive midfield).

What are your goals for the short to medium term?

Just to play for as long as possible and to enjoy myself.

What about the longer term and are you looking towards the 2006 World Cup?

I am just taking each day as it comes and see how things go, but certainly yes that (2006 World Cup) is a big ambition for me.



Vince Grella: The Socceroo star has starred for Serie A club Empoli this season.

Grella grinds his axe

Empoli's Australian midfielder Vince Grella has an axe to grind with Socceroos coach Frank Farina, admitting he wasn't exactly jumping for joy after being selected in the squad for last Thursday's clash against England.

Speaking on SBS' *TheWorldGame* program, Grella expressed his frustration at being largely ignored by Soccer Australia during his time in Italy.

"Nobody's contacted me in three years to see if I was alive or not or what my story was. Where I was or what I was doing," Grella said.

"So for me to tell you now that I'm doing somersaults, I'd be telling you a lie."

Grella, who has yet to receive his first full cap for the Socceroos, earned his call-up for the Upton Park friendly on the back of a stunning season in the Serie A.

"I would speak to him (Farina) and say 'I'd love to play', of course. 'When are we taking off, when are we training, what is the program?'" he said.

"I know this is my career and I'd love to play for Australia but obviously he's got to understand that no one's been in contact with me for three years so sooner or later when he gets in contact with me it's going to be one of the first things I ask."

"Now that I'm playing in the Serie A, it's all a little bit too easy."

Despite his comments, Grella insists he isn't holding any grudges.

"There's no problems," he said. "I've met him (Farina) a couple of times and he seems a good person so I think he'll understand where I'm coming from."

Grella can rightly claim to be the first Australia to ever command regular first-team football in Italy's top flight and his excellent form has helped lowly Empoli into their impressive mid-table position.

One of his finest performances came at the start of December when he won man-of-the-match honours for marking Italian star Andrea Pirlo out of the match in a 1-1 draw against Scudetto favourites AC Milan.

That sort of form has reportedly prompted interest in his signature from glamour clubs Roma, AC Milan and Juventus.

The former star of now-defunct National Soccer League club Carlton admits that he still pinches himself as to how far he's come.

"I've been blessed, super blessed by god to have this opportunity to come from Australia into the Serie A," he said. "If someone had have told me at 10-years-old you were going to play in Italy in the Serie A, I probably would have punched them out."

BY JOBE, CROOK HAS A NEW SET OF WHEELS

By Ben Moring

Newcastle United coach Ian Crook has done a remarkable job in his short tenure at the club.

Taking the side to second in the NSL competition last season, followed up by currently lying third on this season's ladder.

All the more commendable is the statistic that 'Crooky' was without ten regulars not so long ago. Missing that number of established stars can be a blessing in disguise and this couldn't be more true for seventeen-year-old striker, Jobe Wheelhouse.

Jobe has taken his opportunity with both hands and has featured on four occasions this campaign, starting three and can boast his maiden strike, which came on Friday evening, the 31st of January against Adelaide City.

The AIS graduate actually signed a two-year contract for United in the midst of serving his apprenticeship in Canberra, a pleasant surprise for the local boy who completed the paperwork on a holiday break from the Institute.

Jobe Wheelhouse has a bright future ahead of him and hopes to be playing in Spain's Primera Liga one day. 'Wheelsie' was kind enough to take time out to reflect upon his blossoming career and answered some questions for ABSW:

ABSW: "How has the AIS had an impact on your young career?"

JW: "It's been pretty good, although I was injured for eight out of the twelve



Jobe Wheelhouse: Newcastle youngster has settled in nicely in the National League.

not long ago.

"He just has faith, we've got a great squad, it's a pretty in-depth squad and he has faith in us every time we go out onto the pitch. He just has faith in the players he puts out there."

"He [Crook] says 'we've got the team to win this game, we must go out believing in ourselves, having confidence' and it's sort of showed in the last few weeks."

ABSW: "What has 'Crooky' done for you on a personal level?"

JW: "Just the confidence he's brought, he [Crook] says 'you're a good player, I don't care how old you are, whether you are seventeen or thirty-seven, you are going to play if you're good enough'."

"If I put in the hard yards at training he'll keep playing me, even though we have injuries. He [Crook] said that 'if you're still playing good, that's not to say the big names will go straight back in when they come back from injury'."

ABSW: "What has been the biggest difference in making the step from National Youth League to the National Soccer League?"

JW: "Just the intensity and it's so much faster. You aren't playing against sixteen, seventeen, eighteen-year-olds you are playing against men, so they're a lot stronger, they give you a lot more stick. You only have half the time to make decisions on the ball, it's just that much quicker."

ABSW: "You bagged your first goal on the 31st January away to Adelaide City, what was the feeling like?"

JW: "It's a great feeling. I didn't really have much time to think about it, we just grabbed the ball after we scored. We were down 2-0 after not very long and then I scored, so we grabbed the ball and got back to halfway and we were back on the trot again."

"We hadn't won in Adelaide ever, a Newcastle side, so it was even more beneficial when we got the three points there."

ABSW: "Has there been a marked difference in attitude with the finals series approaching?"

JW: "Not really. The training's pretty laid back, everyone gets stuck in and you have to play for your spot. But 'Crooky' and 'Dutchy' are pretty relaxed at training. 'Dutchy' gets up you more if you're doing something wrong, whereas 'Crooky' is more about encouragement, so you have that good balance."

"It's in the back of everyone's mind that we have to finish in this top 6 and then with the teams in the finals series, it's going to be pretty hard with injuries. But we are hoping to get a few of the boys back in the next few weeks and the suspensions will be finished next week."

ABSW: "Have you harboured thoughts of trying your luck overseas anytime soon and what is your favourite league and team?"

JW: "I'm looking at going overseas half way through next season or at the end of the season. Because I don't have a European passport, I'm probably looking at trials in Holland and Belgium and there's a few things in Spain which could pop up."

"My favourite league would be the Spanish League at the moment and favourite team would be Real Madrid."

TEAM SPIRIT THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

By Peter Damalas

Boasting one of the youngest player averages in the National Soccer League, Sydney club the Northern Spirit have every reason to believe the future to be bright.

It was only weeks ago, however, that the club's 2002-2003 season looked in turmoil as the senior team were near the bottom of the ladder.

Three key figures in the Spirit's recent revival have been coach, Lawrie McKenna, veteran defender, Alex Tobin, and young striker, Dylan Macallister.

In his first season as head coach of an NSL club, Lawrie McKenna, born in Scotland, has forged a unique team spirit at Northern Spirit.

After the exodus of a host of senior players from the squad during the off season, the task of melding a team together was made especially difficult.

McKenna could not rely on the fire power of Cardozo and Cervinski, or the midfield talents of Craig Foster, Robert Enes and Scott Thomas.

"With budget cuts and players moving on, we were presented with a group of players that either needed a chance or wanted to set a new goal for themselves.

We have played reasonably well under the circumstances, and we've been unlucky not to get some results.

The kids now have half a season's experience and while we don't have any superstars, the players work hard and back each other up," McKenna said.

The coach has been central to the direction taken by the club. The decision to postpone fixtures earlier in the season was reached alongside the Director of Football, Bill Collins.

While McKenna described the 2002-2003 season as a very even contest, he did argue for the expansion of the NSL to 30 or 36 matches.

"The season is not long enough, we need more games. As a full time club, the Spirit runs for 52 weeks. If we don't make the finals, we will be facing a break from March to October. This is too long," he said.

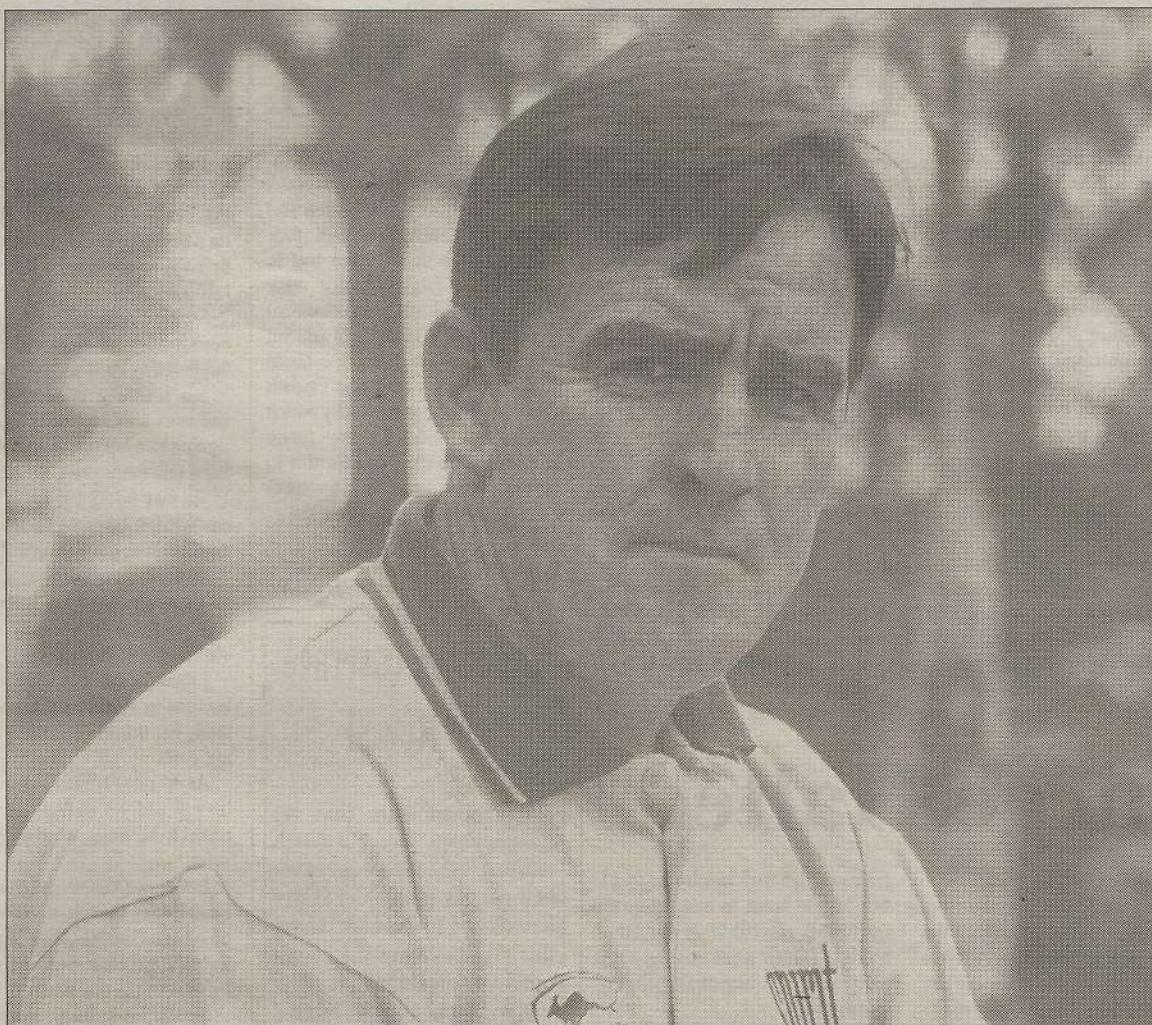
Supporters have every reason to believe that the club are moving forward into a period of stability, with McKenna announcing that two major sponsors have signed on for two years.

"This is a tremendous step for the future. The task now is to keep the majority of the players and negotiate with the players off contract. If we can sign three or four players next season, we will be very competitive," McKenna said.

One of the players McKenna has relied on to lead the young brigade from the back has been Alex Tobin.

For the centre back with 113 caps under his belt, this season has seen another record breaking achievement.

In notching up his 500th National Soccer League game in the Round 20 clash away to Perth Glory, Tobin ensured his standing as one of



LAWRIE MCKINNA: Had the tough task of guiding a fairly young squad through to the NSL but has reaped in the rewards with credible results.



ALEX TOBIN: His influence on the Spirit squad has been flawless.



DYLAN MACALISTER: Young Spirit star has put his overseas misery behind and has starred for McKenna's squad.

Northern
Spirit
fc.

can't see why we can't challenge for the championship in the years to come" he said.

It is certainly the club's good results over the last five weeks that will attract supporters back to the grounds.

Tobin said that poor attendances have been a 'general statistic' of the NSL and that better marketing is required to create awareness.

As the President of the Professional Footballers Association, Tobin has an important role to play in the administration of the sport.

"From the PFA's view, there has been a push for major reform and over the past twelve months, the clubs and Soccer Australia have come into agreement regarding proposals for reform. The way this is going to take shape is still uncertain, we have to sort out the media con-

tract with Channel 7 and the government commission is still to post its findings. But people are quietly confident about the reform process," Tobin said.

The Socceroos, magnificent 3-1 victory over England at Upton Park raised a number of issues that Tobin considers a reflection of the game at international level.

"The influence of European clubs must be addressed by FIFA. We can't have a situation where 11 players come off in a friendly international because of the pressure applied by top clubs.

While the Socceroos would have been extremely pleased by the win, they would have loved it had England played with their best eleven for the full game.

It is disappointing when management take such an attitude and downplay the importance of the event.

In England's case, it backfired. It was good to see Harry Kewell front up, despite the pressure from his club team," Tobin said.

The youth element at Northern Spirit is represented by Dylan Macallister.

After scoring six goals for the Olympic Sharks in the championship winning team of last season, Macallister entered the new campaign as one of the hottest properties in the domestic game.

However, a combination of injury and contract problems have forced the talented striker to miss the first half of the season altogether.

During the off season, Macallister trialled at Swiss club, Aarau. His contract in Europe fell through, and the pay package, unit and car which was promised to him, failed to materialise.

"I went through an emotional rollercoaster at times during the season.

After returning to Australia, my clearance to play for Northern Spirit was deferred until the transfer window re-opened in January, I could not even play at youth level," he said.

Having played a handful of games in a four-month period, Macallister was fighting an uphill battle to retain match fitness.

"Motivation was not the hardest thing for me. But with so few games under my belt, I was behind the eight ball, and the lack of match practice has been evident in my play," he said.

With the arrival of Scottish import, Stewart Petrie, Macallister is looking to the crucial weeks ahead as the Spirit attempt to clinch a finals berth.

"It is most important that I am consistent. I've been working together with Petrie at training and during games and hopefully the goals will come," Macallister said.

Despite an unlucky first attempt at making the grade in Europe, the continent is still very much in the 20 year old's mind.

Dylan Macallister will be hoping that next season, after which his contract expires, will provide more opportunities to leave a mark on the NSL.

Letters to the Editor

FARINA'S SELECTION IS A-CLASS

Dear Sir,
In light of the Socceroos selection for the Australia versus England match, I believe Frank Farina picked rather a good squad for the showdown.

There is a neat mix of the experienced players and an introduction of the younger or less capped players. I think it was reported that only one player who played against Uruguay some 18 months ago was not available through injury.

Many of those players I guess are coming to the end of their international careers but I would like to say that they are still the best international players and as such deserve to be called up for the match.

On a similar note, I believe Farina has picked the right less experienced players. Lucas Neill deserves to be there on form alone, having only

missed I think one or two games for Blackburn and being one of their best players to date. Vince Grella is another who is starring with his club Empoli in the Serie A and a measure of this is the fact that many top Italian and European clubs are vying for his signature.

Marco Bresciano, as Australia's most expensive player after last season's transfer to Parma while not experiencing as much game time as he would like is obvious quality and he also deserves his spot.

But my biggest praise goes to John Aloisi who is currently with Osasuna in the Primera Liga. Many regard it as the toughest league in the world, so for him to be playing in it week in and week out speaks volumes of his ability. Also he has an outstanding international record. After some 20 odd games for the

Socceroos, Aloisi has notched in excess of 10 goals. While everyone speaks of Harry Kewell as the man to get Australia rolling, Aloisi is in fact more deadly in these matches and if I were Frank Farina would be the first man chosen in the starting XI.

As for the England squad I believe the English FA have done the right thing in bringing in a heap of youngsters, I do think they have taken it to the extreme.

Sven Goran Eriksson said he will change his entire squad for the second half, allowing the fringe players to get a run.

This not only makes a farce of the game and even before a ball has been kicked says to Australia that they are not worthy of a full strength England team to play, but it also means that the super clubs of

English Football have won in vetoing the availability of their players.

Clubs such as Man United and Arsenal have come out that their players are too tired for this match, but they are forgetting that other countries are having international friendlies on the same night and yet have not made as much fuss about the release of their other non-English players. I believe any friendly match benefits both sides for any future competition matches and for this to happen, it takes away from the spectacle of this so-called Ashes show-down.

Frank Crisco,
Merrylands, NSW.

Too much coverage on Kewell

Dear Sir,

It happens every time the Aussies shape up for a match and that is the debate about the best playing position of Harry Kewell and I would like to say this as a change...I don't believe he should play at all.

Having only made himself available for a handful of the Socceroos matches since he made his debut, it is a thought he is too good for his country of birth, as he is allowed to choose when he will and when he won't play for Australia. There are plenty of other Australian players much more willing than him who will put his hand up and volunteer to play for their country.

Likewise his form for the Socceroos is nothing short of ordinary. When he does play regardless of the position he is in he plays extremely average. As a world class player he should be able to adapt to either playing wide left or up front, but on every occasion he fails to inspire his team when many are aware of his ability.

For these two reasons alone he should be booted from the Socceroos, unless he has a severe attitude change of which will benefit the whole of Australian soccer.

From The Email
Anthony Laler

Power Surge Halted

Dear Sir,
I can only laugh at the Parramatta Power. After having lit up the competition with a devastating few weeks, they have suddenly come back down to earth with a big thud with two very average losses to two sides with nowhere near the ability of the Power.

I attended the Spirit versus Power catch up game and all I can say was the team was woeful. Playing against a side that is essentially a youth side the Power's more experienced players pranced around with little or no conviction and were duly beaten by

the hungrier of the two sides.

Against the Strikers two howling goalkeeping errors brought the Power to their knees. I mean to have a lopping cross come into the six yard area and for Liam Reddy not to claim it is absolutely unforgivable and the second, to fumble a shot coming at a comfortable height to catch allowing a striker to nip in and score is shocking.

But it is not only the keeper who should be blamed, but the entire squad.

They failed to go into the tackle but I guess what do you expect. The two centre backs are so tall and

lanky that if they did try to tackle they would break in half, while the midfield is concentrating so hard on trying to control when they get it that they forget it is important to in fact win the ball.

I am sorry I ever expected the Power to continue their assault on the NSL and perhaps even challenge the finals series. As always, you have proved to be too inconsistent and as such your poor attitude deserves to be spanked the way it has the past week.

Kelly Brindall,
Milsons Point, NSW.

sponsors.

All I hear is chairman Remo Nogarotto stating that they are looking towards the 2004/05 season, but I think this is a wrong move as we might as well pull the league for a year if that's the case.

What we need to do is reassess all NSL clubs, chose the ones that are financially well off and not on how much tradition they have.

Once upon a time tradition did a lot to gain a spot in the NSL but if there's no green floating around

tradition means nothing.

We need a league that will rival other codes like Rugby League, Union and AFL.

Let's hope that the powers that be at Soccer Australia think more towards what will happen in a few months time rather than a few years as Australian soccer supporters such as myself are sick of the 'waiting process' of having a perfect league.

Kevin Moseley,
Box Hill, VIC.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Dear Sir,
I want to know whether Soccer Australia have made up concrete plans as to what is going to happen beyond this terrible National League season we are currently experiencing?

I know they've stated that next season's league will be shortened but what good is this for the league itself? In my opinion I think next year will be the same if not worse than this even though the code has managed to tag down a few new

clubs, chose the ones that are financially well off and not on how much tradition they have.

Once upon a time tradition did a lot to gain a spot in the NSL but if there's no green floating around

tradition means nothing.

We need a league that will rival other codes like Rugby League, Union and AFL.

Let's hope that the powers that be at Soccer Australia think more towards what will happen in a few months time rather than a few years as Australian soccer supporters such as myself are sick of the 'waiting process' of having a perfect league.

Kevin Moseley,
Box Hill, VIC.

Hindmarsh Blues

Dear Sir,
After reading the story written by ABSW's Adelaide correspondent Allan Crisp on the state of Hindmarsh a few weeks back, one has to ask the question of how professional are our National League clubs?

The

Force, which was quite obvious this season was running on quite a tight budget and threatened to leave Hindmarsh at the start of the year bound for Norwood for financial issues. If the club can't afford to maintain or hold a ground like Hindmarsh then why stay there?

What this will only cause is fighting and bickering amongst the supporters, which will in turn reflect poorly on the club. Hindmarsh however isn't the only stadium that has faced a problem in looking the part.

Last year's Grand-Final winners

the Olympic Sharks are also culprits of playing in a field that resembles a beach.

Toyota Park was

once a marvellous

field at the start of

the National League

season however as

time wore on, so did

the field and that all

but ended the sur-

face. I think you can

thank Rugby League

side the Cronulla

Sharks for that who have started

training for the new season and have

pretty much butchered the once bril-

liant surface at Toyota.

The question though burns right

through me as to why should soccer

clubs share fields with rugby sides?

We know the impact that sport provides on fields so why pursue it?

It's a damn shame that it's come down to sharing fields with Rugby sides.

Phil Leznak
Bondi, NSW.



Can Hindmarsh Stadium return to this again?

Glorious Mori

Dear Editor,

It was a huge relief to see that the Perth Glory signed up one of its finest players in the squad on a three-year-contract with the club last week.

Striker Damian Mori has certainly been a huge hit since moving from the Force to Perth in '2000.

His finishing is second to none and as a Glory supporter I hailed this signing as a big one as I think he still has a few more years ahead of him.

He may be 32 but I still think he has what it takes to be the leading marksman in the National League.

With as many as fourteen goals to his name already, Mori is leading the way yet again and its only virtue he stays longer at the Glory.

I think he still has what it takes to become an Aussie Socceroo; he certainly has that killer instinct for scoring goals.

At the rate Damian's going I think he will add yet another top scorer's medal to his name when the year finishes.

Let's hope that we get that elusive Final trophy though, it's been a long time since we've won something, we've come close but here's hoping for the double this year.

Finally, just want to add that it was unfortunate that the club lost out on three valuable points a few weeks



Perth Glory striker Damian Mori put pen to paper on an extended three-year deal at the club a few weeks back.

back, we didn't deserve that but I know the side will be strong enough to over-ride this and bounce back to top form and top of the National League ladder.

I'll use a line off the famous movie Mel Gibson starred in a few years back in Braveheart - 'They may take our points, but they can't take our position which will be being at the top of the National League ladder.'

Paddy Wright,
Perth, WA.

Wolves v AIS

Dear Sir,

I guess you could say that my son Justin Pasfield is the second half of the Wollongong Wolves, Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Amateur Registration fiasco. The

Wollongong Wolves have decided in their wisdom to withhold amateur releases to allow Justin and Dezi Giraldi to take up full Scholarships at the AIS Soccer Program.

Having been the main mode of transport getting Justin to the extra training camps and games, I guess as any soccer parent would know and seeing how hard Justin has worked over the past 4 years to achieve this elite level of soccer by:

- Making his National Soccer League (NSL) debut with the Wollongong Wolves in April 2002.

- Being selected in the Australian Schoolboys 2002 side

- Receiving a full soccer Scholarship at the AIS in 2003

It pains me to see this unforgivable

fiasco continue.
I fail to understand the Wollongong Wolves decision to deny a release to allow Justin to attend and partake in his Soccer Scholarship at the AIS.

I question as to whether it would be smarter to put these boys on a contract, provide them with a release to attend the AIS, complete their scholarship and return to the Wolves more experienced and better players. Sorry, I did say smarter, but I guess we are dealing with the Wollongong Wolves.

As is any concerned parent (well maybe with the exception of some of the board members at the Wollongong Wolves), I cannot let this situation deny Justin his chance to live out his dream.

Soccer Australian must act on this matter urgently not only for the benefit of Justin and Dezi but for all those elite soccer players that will follow at this level.

John Pasfield,
Wollongong

Champs Last Year But Who Cares?

Dear Sir,
What does it take to attract a new group of supporters to a National League side?

Last year's champions the Olympic Sharks did an amazing achievement by winning the title last year in Perth with coach Gary Phillips who debuted in his first year as the club's number one alongside a handful of young players.

The Sharks opted to move to the Sutherland area to gain new support from the Shire area however this has been the death of the club.

Support for the side has dwindled and it's showed in crowd statistics every second week.

From memory the biggest crowd the Sharks have been able to pull this season was the round ten clash with

the Perth Glory that had 5,020 people at Toyota Park. On average, the side gains around 3000 supporters at every home game if that which is a joke. Last season's champions having a turnout of that is something that should ask the question to its owners, was this move worth it?

I've heard talk that the Sharks are thinking of relocating back to Leichhardt Oval or even St George Stadium like the good old days?

This will probably be the best option as it's quite clear the people of Sutherland have not tapped into the Olympic Sharks side of support. Sure there has been a few new faces



around Toyota but the sad thing has been the loss of many real Olympic fans from past years.

These people were the ones that brought the crowds in at St George, Belmore and Leichhardt, but unfortunately have given up on the club.

Winning National Leagues is the best feeling a club could ever have, but what good is it if the club wins something and have no one to support it with?

Concerned Fan
Bill Poulos
Campsie, NSW



OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

VERDY RATES HINDMARSH UNSAFE

Hindmarsh Stadium, seldom out of the headlines in Adelaide, is again the subject of derision after being rejected as a suitable venue by visiting Japanese team Tokyo Verdy.

Verdy flew into Adelaide last Tuesday to begin a 10-day training camp in preparation for their 2003 J League season, but, after inspection, declared the Hindmarsh Stadium pitch unsafe.

Alternative venues were hastily arranged with Verdy playing Premier League champions Raiders at Marden Sports Complex last Saturday (February 15), while the visitor will meet the Adelaide City Force NSL squad today (Tuesday, February 18) at Newton Sports Field.

A match with South Australia's State team will follow tomorrow (Wednesday, February 19), again at the Campbelltown City Soccer Club headquarters of Newton.

The Verdy rating of the Hindmarsh pitch as unsafe is in direct contrast with the opinions of Adelaide City players, who say the surface is true and flat and soft under foot.

However, those opinions were expressed before the stadium ground staff repaired turf damaged by a double dose of poison was

accidentally sprayed to kill weed-infested sections.

The restoration of turf left loose areas, which became the major concern of the Japanese team officials.

"Hindmarsh is a good stadium, but the condition of the pitch isn't so good," Verdy general manager Tadashi Karai, told the Advertiser soccer writer Meno Toutsidis.

"Of course we expected to use Hindmarsh Stadium, but this isn't possible," said Tadashi Karai, who added the facilities at Marden and Newton were acceptable.

Before Verdy left Japan, South Australian Soccer Federation general manager Tony Farrugia warned the club that the pitch would not be as pristine as it was on its three previous visits to South Australia.

"Hindmarsh is a primary consideration when teams agree to come here for pre-season camps so this is a big disappointment," he said.

"These tours inject about \$2 million dollars into the States economy and I would hope we can get Hindmarsh back to being the best soccer surface in the country."

FREQUENT FLIERS

The SASF association with Japanese team started in 1995 when Urawa Red Diamonds visited Adelaide to train at the Parks Community Centre and play its official training games at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Urawa Red Diamonds returned

the following year when the Japanese Under 19 National squad also used Adelaide as its training base.

The Japanese National Youth team was back again in 1997, along with newcomer to SA, Nagoya Grampus 8.

It was boom tourist time in SA in 1998 when Nagoya Grampus 8 and the National Under 17 Japanese squad were joined by Sanfrecce Hiroshima, then coached by former Socceroo supremo Eddie Thomson.

Sanfrecce gave Adelaide a huge seal of approval by coming back in 1999 and in 2000 when it had Verdy Kawasaki, Consadole Sapporo and an Inter Collegiate University team as company.

CAMEROON STAR

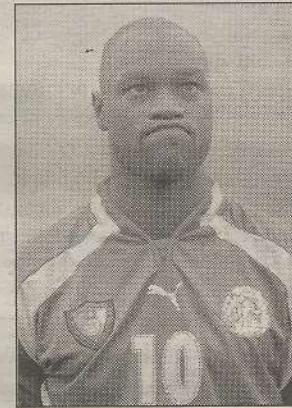
Patrick Mboma has been the centre of attention since Verdy Tokyo touched down in Adelaide.

The Cameroon World Cup star and former African Player of the Year played in the 1998 and 2002 World Cup finals, scoring a memorable goal against France in Paris.

Mboma was a key figure when Cameroon won football gold in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games final against Spain.

That was the only gold medal won by Cameroon in Olympic Games history.

Mboma played in each of Lions six games in the 1998 and 2002 World Cup campaigns, scoring



Cameroon star Patrick Mboma has touched down in Adelaide with touring Japanese side Tokyo Verdy.

twice and in 2000 was named African Footballer of the Year.

His previous clubs have been Paris St Germain, Chateauroux, Metz (France), Gamba Osaka (Japan), Cagliari, Parma (Italy) and Sunderland (England).

Mboma has an overall goal tally in excess of 150, including 29 international goals in 52 appearances for Cameroon.

COREY COLLECTS

Corey Artone fired home four goals to steer unconquered MetroStars to a 5-1 win over Olympic FC in a stunning Bianco

Summer Series semi-final at the Marden Sports Complex.

State team midfield star and winner of the Melta Medal, artistic

Artone was joined on the scoring sheet by Michael Matricciani.

Artone, bothered, bewitched and bewildered Olympic with goals in the 26th, 30th, 43rd and 51st minutes, while Matricciani grabbed his goal in the 72nd minute.

Former Galaxy striker Greg Hagias snared a consolation goal for Olympic in the 80th minute.

Despite the heavy defeat, ex-Galaxy defender Paul Pezos was impressive in his second match for Olympians.

Blue Eagles, also unbeaten, qualified to clash with Metro in the grand final on Friday, February 21, after drawing the second semi-final 1-1 with Raiders.

The Blues introduced new Modbury Jets acquisition Tyson Prescott in the second half and new coach Dragan Sipka must have been impressed by the skill of the 19-year old.

Young Sam Monterosso continued his rich vein of scoring two minutes before half time when he earned a penalty and duly netted from the spot.

Jason Trimboli had Raiders on level terms in the opening minute of the second half when he pounded in a trademark strike similar to his grand final effort of last season.

The Eagles took the giant step forward by winning the penalty shoot out 4-2 in a nail-biting finale.

It was left to Michael Pirone to seal the Blue Eagles final spot when

he fired truly for the 4-2 verdict.

Olympic FC and Raiders will play off for third place in this inaugural competition as a curtain raiser to the grand final.

The winners of this series, which carries \$6,000 prizemoney will collect the major prize of \$3,000.

BIANCO NIGHT SERIES

Modbury Jets 4 (Albanese 3, Ramsden) Playford Patriots 1 (Pullen).

Semi-finals

MetroStars 5 (Artone 4, Matricciani) Olympic FC 1 (Hagias).

Blue Eagles 1 (Monterosso) Raiders 1 (Trimboli). Blue Eagles won 4-2 on penalties.

Grand Final

Friday, February 21

Marden Sports Complex

MetroStars v Blue Eagles (8pm)

Third place play-off

Raiders v Olympic FC (6pm)

FLEET STREET SOUTHERN NIGHT SERIES

Friday, February 21

Wilf Taylor Reserve

Grand Final

Cobras v SASI (8pm)

Third place play-off

Hills Hawks v Noarlunga Utd (6pm)



VICTORIAN CHRONICLES

By Brendon Davis

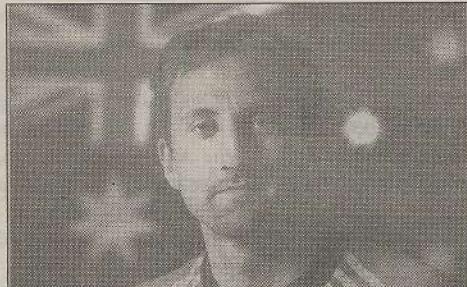
Horvat to Retire

Knights captain Steve Horvat will retire at the end of the season.

Horvat, who was born in Geelong, played his junior soccer at North Geelong and has represented Australia at Under 16, Under 20 and the Socceroos at National and Olympic level will "play in his last Victorian Derby" Knights general manager John Ovcaric told ABSW in an exclusive report.

Since his debut in 1989 Horvat has played 160 NSL games which have yielded 10 goals including the winner at the Colonial Stadium derby. All bar 24 of these games have been played for his beloved Melbourne Knights. Horvat also boasts two seasons with Croatian giants Hajduk Split.

The big man will not be lost to the Knights however, his involvement will "involve him moving upstairs" Ovcaric said without expanding.



Knights skipper Steve Horvat will retire at the end of the NSL season.

Milestone in Derby

Another Knights great will achieve a remarkable milestone in Sundays Derby.

Andrew Marth will play his 250th NSL game for the Melbourne Knights. Fittingly this will be achieved against archrivals South Melbourne at the Sommers Street.

Surely Marth will be best remembered for having captained the club to their back to back NSL Championships in 1994/95 and 1995/96.

While this has been a turbulent season for Marth, 250 games for the club is an outstanding achievement; everyone at ABSW congratulates him on achieving this.

Fausto is Released

Former Socceroo Fausto De Amicis has been released by South Melbourne.

De Amicis has been involved in various controversies over the last 18 months at South, which included a period of demotion to the Youth team following a spat over club captaincy.

In controversial circumstances Fausto withdrew from the South team only 10 minutes prior to the kick off at Sydney Olympic last week.

Danny Wright told ABSW his future plans "don't include De Amicis so it was better to release him".

Despite rumours to the contrary, the Knights will not be signing De Amicis prior to the close of the transfer window on 15th February. A Knights director confirmed the board had discussed De Amicis but had resolved not to pursue the matter and confirmed the Knights had not spoken to De Amicis since his release from South.

Poutakidis signs at Bob Jane

South Melbourne has concluded the signing of Sam Poutakidis who was captain of Victorian Premier League Club, Port Melbourne Sharks.

A hard-running and goal-scoring midfielder, Poutakidis has been a regular for the Victorian State team.

He is widely regarded as one of the best players outside the National Soccer League since a stint with the Adelaide Sharks in the late 1990s.

South Melbourne senior coach Danny Wright has been a long-time admirer of the hard working midfielder.

"Sam Poutakidis represents the fighting spirit and the commitment the South Melbourne teams are renowned for. We welcome him to our squad".

"Poutakidis will give us not only extra depth but I

believe can play a part in our path to a successful end to the season," says Wright.

Poutakidis is delighted to be joining South Melbourne.

"It's a great honour to be playing for Australia's most successful soccer club. I look forward to working with Danny Wright and the boys and to hopefully be playing in the finals series."

The 26-year-old Poutakidis made his debut for South in the 1-0 victory over Brisbane on Wednesday night.

Ironically Sam's proud older brother Ken is a highly regarded Melbourne management consultant who was recently retained as a consultant to the board at South.

100 Games for Susa

South Melbourne's left-footed midfielder Zeljko Susa, who has had an interrupted season, played his 100th National Soccer League against Brisbane Strikers on Wednesday night.

Susa who returned from Europe during the pre-season, played his first match in Round 12 but soon found himself on the sidelines after being sent off against Newcastle. Due to a foot injury he missed the traditional interstate derby against Olympic Sharks but has now returned at the most crucial time of the season.

The 24 year olds potent ball skills and deft touches will be essential during South Melbourne's run towards the new look finals series.

"It has sort of crept on me. I didn't realise I was so close to playing 100 matches but it's good and I am glad that I will be playing my 100th match", says Susa.

Susa is excited to be playing against his former club Melbourne Knights this Sunday. "We have to take it game by game. I have a lot of friends at the Knights and I am excited to play in the Melbourne derby".

Great Times Ahead - Wright

Danny Wright believes the changes occurring

Lakeside reflect the "generational change of 1987/88".

At that time South were bloodied youngsters including Healy, Foster, Steve Tassios and Paul Trimboli. This squad formed in 1987/88 went on to win the 1990/91 championship according to Wright.



Zeljko Susa: South Melbourne's talented star played his 100th match last week.

He told ABSW "the new management and policies are very similar to those. We have some of the best young players in Australia, it's a very exciting time".

Tangles & Jezza

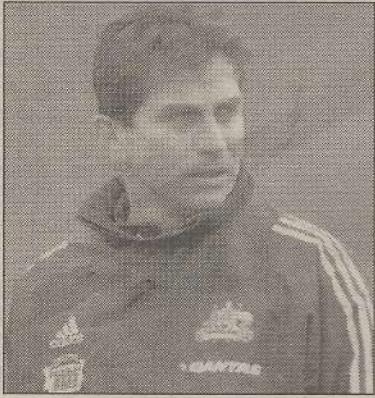
In one of the best attended pre match Presidents Lunches at South Melbourne, former test cricketer, AFL footballer and media commentator Max "Tangles" Walker enthralled the large group with a collection of witty sporting encounters.

Walker is now an ambassador for the worthwhile charity the DOXA Foundation which the South Melbourne club is assisting in its fundraising endeavours.

Also addressing the lunch was one of the greatest ever AFL footballers Alex Jesulinko who spoke passionately of his formative years mentioning his enjoyment derived from the round ball code.

Max Walker tossed the coin at the game before walking off to a standing ovation from the strong crowd of 6,000 vocal fans.

Socceroos look to more European Trips



Socceroo coach Frank Farina believes more camps in Europe will benefit the Australian side.

Everton coach Kershaw seeking Australian NSL job

Everton coach Alan Kershaw is seeking a job with an Australian National League club for next season. A former Dundee United midfielder, Kershaw is looking to return to Australia later this year, having previously played with Sydney City in the early 1980s.

One of the most respected coaches working in England, Kershaw also has extensive experience in Scandinavia, having worked closely with both Swedish and Norwegian clubs on behalf of Everton.

Tribalfootball.com understands Kershaw is seeking talks with Wollongong Wolves president Neil Greig after being alerted to Wollongong Wolves coach Ron Corry's comments that he is likely to retire at the end of this season.

Brisbane Strikers have also been linked with Kershaw, who has worked as both a scout and coach under Dave Moyes and Walter Smith at Everton for several seasons.

Rooney is ready, insists Kewell

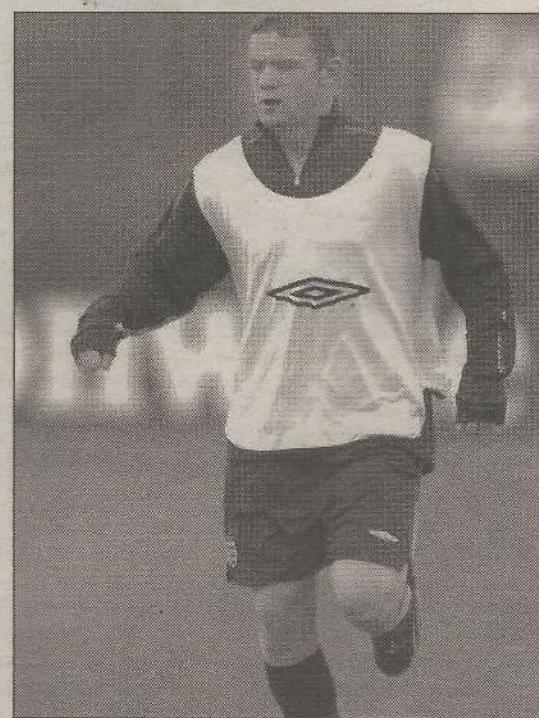
Australia's world class midfielder Harry Kewell has backed Sven-Goran Eriksson in handing boy wonder Wayne Rooney his debut against the Aussies last Wednesday.

"Wayne has got the world at his feet," said Kewell. "I think he's a great little player. We have a player like that at Leeds in James Milner and it's fantastic to see a young talent coming through."

Kewell made his debut for Australia at 17 in a 3-0 defeat by Chile.

"I don't think he's too young to play for England," Kewell added.

"People might have said that about me when I made my debut for Australia. But it's up to you to show what you can do. I was ready and I think Wayne is, so good luck to him."



Rising young English star Wayne Rooney is ready for any International challenge says Aussie star Harry Kewell.

Australia coach Frank Farina said that playing more Socceroos games in Europe could be the only way the squad can get together in the future.

None of the players named in Farina's 18-man squad in Wednesday's friendly with England at West Ham's Upton Park play in the Australian league, choosing the lucrative European leagues to ply their trade instead.

"We have some quality players abroad because as soon as players in Australia show any potential they are out of their own country and are sign-

ing for a club in the English, Italian, Spanish or Dutch leagues," said Farina.

"But unfortunately that is our lot. The majority of our games since I took over in 1999 have been in Europe and we are hoping to stage even more here in future because this is where the players are."

Australia have not played an international match with what is considered to be their strongest side since they missed out on a World Cup finals place in Japan and South Korea last year by losing in a two-legged play off against Uruguay in 2001.

The Oceania Nations tournament was last year contested by the Socceroos with only a locally-based squad because their leading players were all in Europe.

"The geography of where players are based can be a problem, but it is the same for countries like Brazil and even England and you just have to make sure you win more battles with the club coaches than you lose," said Farina.

Support for soccer in Australia is increasing but Farina believes that it can never reach its full potential unless the Socceroos at last make it to a World Cup finals. The path to the finals was

recently opened up with the FIFA announcement that the winner of the Oceania group will go straight into the finals instead of having to win the group and play a two-legged clash with the winners of another qualifying pool.

"The support for soccer in Australia would grow if we played at a World Cup finals and we haven't played on the biggest stage since 1974 in West Germany."

"I don't want to go on about it but we have been hard done by in the past and now we've got our best ever chance of qualifying," said Farina.

Angry South players hold meeting over De Amicis axe

South Melbourne players are fuming at the sacking of Fausto De Amicis last week.

Tribalfootball.com understands a players meeting was held last week to discuss the situation with a growing rift developing between players and coaching staff.

South players were angry with the way De Amicis was shown the door last week and there were even calls for a strike.

De Amicis, who has won two championship medals with South, had fallen out with head coach Danny Wright and was released from his contract last week. Melbourne Knights and VPL outfit Bulleen have both been linked with the former Australia international fullback.

It was reported that a number of players threatened to boycott the last home match against the Force in which the side went down two goals to one.

Fausto signed with the Blues during season 96/97 where he enjoyed much success at the club winning titles in

97/98 and 99/00 and also had the opportunity to tour Brazil and take part in the World Club Championships.

De Amicis was closing in on the 300th NSL game mark but with this unfortunate incident, has pushed back his intended milestone.



Defender Fausto De Amicis was given the flick by club South Melbourne which has angered many players of the side.

Bosnich banned after no-show

Mark Bosnich has been suspended from international soccer after failing to appear at a Football Association disciplinary hearing.

Bosnich, 31, requested a personal hearing on misconduct charges after testing positive to cocaine late last year.

The former Socceroo goalkeeper was expected to argue that the drug entered his system by accident after his drink was spiked at a London nightclub.

But with his legal team in place, Bosnich did not show up for the hearing at a hotel at Heathrow Airport on Monday, several newspapers reported.

The FA and Bosnich's agent refused to comment on whether Bosnich was at the hearing, saying only that the case would be re-scheduled for next week at the earliest.

But the FA slapped a worldwide playing ban on him until his case was heard.

"His suspension will continue until such a time that his case can be heard and has now been extended worldwide," the FA said on its website.

Bosnich faces a one-year ban if the FA panel finds him guilty of misconduct.

He tested positive last year while he was contracted to west London club Chelsea.

Chelsea initially suspended him from his STG42,000 (\$A116,000)-a-week contract and formally sacked him last month.

His appeal against his sacking was rejected last week by a Premier League tribunal and Bosnich must now decide whether to appeal to another body or take the matter to a civil court.



Former Roo custodian Mark Bosnich will play the waiting game about his footballing career after testing positive for cocaine.

Laza wants regular meetings

Birmingham City's Socceroos winger Stan Lazaridis is calling for an Ashes-style series between England and Australia at football.

Lazaridis believes that the intense rivalry between the two nations at cricket should be extended to a series of meetings between Sven-Goran Eriksson and Frank Farina's sides.

The former West Ham player wants a two-legged home and away meeting every couple of years.

And he has warned Eriksson that the Aussies will prove they are now a force to be reckoned with as they look to emulate the success of the Terry Venables era.

Lazaridis said: "We are a side that can be taken seriously now and an Ashes-type series with England would

be great and I am sure would be popular given the great rivalry between the two countries.

"I know you would have to work out all the logistics but why not have a three match series or something on a home and away basis?

"It would be carrying things on from the cricket, rugby and tennis and there are loads of Australians living over here who would support it and plenty of English people settled Down Under who would feel the same."

"You could maybe play for a cup every couple of years and then whoever won would retain it until the next time."

"It's true to say that, as Aussie sportsmen, we are driven by what the cricket team, the hockey players and the swimmers do."

"There's only a small population and I think it's great what we've managed to produce. So far, the football team have been in the background - but we think we can get to the standard they've been achieving."

"In Australia football has still got the climb to make as we're probably behind cricket."



Socceroo Stan Lazaridis hopes for more friendly matches against the English.

et and rugby league in popularity. We're not the number one game - but we think our squad is good now."

As regards to the new Australian lineup 'Laza' stated, "this squad is one of the best we've had and there are a lot of young players in Serie A or the Premiership. Before it used to be made up more of First Division players or people on the fringe of Premiership teams."

Lazaridis is good friends with the Australian wicket-keeper and hard-hitting batsman Adam Gilchrist with the pair of them both from Perth.

He said: "I know Adam and the Waugh brothers. I've been here in England for about eight years now and I almost feel English except when the cricket's on television. I tend to want England to do well, but not in the Ashes of course."

VPL Match Of The Round

Bentleigh Greens 1

Fawkner Blues 1

Kingston Heath, 15 February 2003

Two of last season's Top Five teams played out a hard-fought and entertaining 1-1 draw at Bentleigh on Saturday night.

There was plenty of action throughout with chances coming from the earliest moments. In the third minute, a powerful drive by Fawkner midfielder, Mark Recchia, which keeper Manny Papas had to grab at the second attempt, almost put Fawkner ahead. Bentleigh striker, Juan Nilo, had three very good first-half chances, starting with a free kick that hit the bar in the 15th minute. Ten minutes later he found himself free on the right of the box but skewed his shot across the face of goal, then in the 40th minute he was denied by a brave Steven

Round 2

SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2003

Bentleigh Greens 1 Fawkner Blues 1
(Mitch Pino) (Carmelo Impiombato)

SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2003

Altona East Phoenix 0 Frankston Pines 1
(Nick Waite)

Preston Lions 5 St Albans Saints 3
(Ivan Filipovski 2, (Joe Bacak 2, Tomislav
Chris Emsovski, Razov)
John Sapazovski, own goal)

Green G Cavaliers 4 Whittlesea Stallions 1
(Andy Vargas 3, (Jim Drossos)
Nick Tsaltas)

Essendon Royals 1 Altona Magic 1
(Kamer Simsek) (Zoran Petrevski)

Played on Monday 17 February 2003

Bulleen Zebras v Port Melbourne Sharks

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Green Gully Cavaliers	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Frankston Pines	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Fawkner Blues	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Preston Lions	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
St Albans Saints	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Whittlesea Stallions	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
Altona Magic	2	0	2	0	4	4	2
Bentleigh Greens	2	0	2	0	4	4	2
Essendon Royals	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Port Melbourne Sharks	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Bulleen Zebras	1	0	0	1	2	5	0
Altona East Phoenix	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Team	Goals
Andy Vargas	Green Gully Cavaliers	4
Peter Hader	Frankston Pines	3
Joe Bacak	St Albans Saints	3
Zoran Petrevski	Altona Magic	2
Peter Kakos	Bentleigh Greens	2
Nick Waite	Frankston Pines	2
Ivan Filipovski	Preston Lions	2

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002/03

NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS - ROUND 21

WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2003

Sydney United Youth 4 Marconi Mustangs 1
(Markovic 37' 65', Simic (Licciardella 49')
46', Filipovic 75')

SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2003

Parra Power Youth 7 Canberra Deakin 1
(Younis 23' 78', DelZio 31', (Pideski 53')
Brownlie 54' 66', Ripepi 71', Mansueto 74')

AIS 3 ACTAS 1
(Celeski 23' 63', (Cattanach)
own goal 90')

SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2003

Wolves Youth 4 Marconi Mustangs 0
(Martin 43', Majurovski 57', Boscoscuro 81',
Gordon 85')

Olym Sharks Youth 0 N Spirit Youth 2
(Fisher 88', Foti 91')
Stallions Youth 1 Newcastle Utd 3
(Talevski 42') (Moreira 19',
Mitchell 24', Masi 62')

BYE - QAS

BYE - Sydney United Youth

LADDER - ROUND 22

Team	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	17	12	3	4	2	35	15	39
Parra Power Youth	17	10	3	4	4	54	26	33
Canberra Deakin	20	9	5	3	6	50	38	32
Wolves Youth	19	8	7	2	4	45	28	31
Newcastle Utd Yth	19	8	6	3	5	34	28	30
North Spirit Youth	17	8	5	3	4	19	11	29
Sydney Utd Youth	17	7	4	4	6	38	25	25
Oly Sharks Youth	19	5	7	2	7	26	24	22
ACTAS	17	5	4	4	8	28	40	19
Stallions Youth	17	4	4	4	9	20	41	16
QAS	18	4	3	4	11	19	49	15
Marconi Mustangs	17	0	3	3	14	7	50	3

FIXTURES - ROUND 23

Northern Spirit Youth Vs Sydney United Youth
(Deferred match from Round 18)

FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2003

ACTAS v Marconi Stallions Youth

Newcastle United Youth v Parramatta Power Youth

SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2003

QAS v Wollongong Wolves Youth

(Deferred match from Round 3)

SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2003

Sydney United Youth v AIS

Marconi Mustangs v Olympic Sharks Youth

BYE - Northern Spirit Youth

BYE - Wollongong Wolves Youth

ACT PREMIERSHIP RE-VAMP

By Graham Cooke

The ACT Premiership will return to a 10-team competition for 2003 after requirements for taking part in the territory's major competition were eased.

Even so, only six of last year's eight teams will be appearing, Monaro sticking to an earlier decision to drop down a division in order to concentrate on developing junior talent, and Weston Creek Royals also downgrading after a couple of disastrous Premiership seasons.

Back into the Premiership after

a break of 15 years comes the Australian National University, along with Cooma, who have not played in the top division since the 1970s, University of Canberra

ting financial trouble.

The remaining teams from last year are Belconnen United, Canberra Deakin, Canberra Olympic, Capital City Suns, Gungahlin Juventus and Tuggeranong United.

In a major concession, the league has granted clubs the choice of playing their home matches either on Saturday or Sunday. There will also be promotion and relegation between the Premiership and division one.

Federation Cup ties kick the season off on March 9, with the Premiership beginning on the weekend of April 26 and 27.



WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Wolves Failed Test — It's a grim reality but the Wolves chances of making the play-offs have all but ended.

Coach Ron Corry was obviously one upset man after this season's performances from his squad.

Playing for pride and for contracts next season will be the Wolves players aim for the remaining fixtures.

One theme which was evident this season was the fact that a number of youngsters did make their debut for the club.

This is a sign of better things to come for the Wolves who could be experiencing a 'golden era' in years to come.

Promotion The Wolves — A number of senior Wolves players and youth development officer Eddie Tesoro are actively promoting the club and soccer by appearing twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays in local Westfield Shopping Centres under the motto

"Meet The Wolves". The response has been excellent so far.

Look out for the boys.

Serious Wolves Girls — The Wolves women went into camp at the end of last month at CampUS East with just over 50 players. The club has 3 junior teams and 2 senior sides.

At the end of the camp several matches were organised with the junior sides playing against Southern Branch and the seniors against Sydney University. Come along and watch the girls at Brandon Park from February on Sundays, kick-off 2 PM to 5.30 PM.

Corrimal Leagues Club Knockout Kicks Off — For over 40 years the Corrimal Leagues Club has sponsored this annual soccer event.

Played at four different locations results of week one saw some close games. Club coaches used the pre-season matches to trial players in various positions, 16 players can be fielded in unlimited interchanges.

The knockout continues with round 2, week 3 on 23rd February, week 4 on 2nd March, week 5 on 9th March and the final week 6 on 16th March.

Games kick-off on all grounds 10.30am, 11.30am, 1pm and 2.30pm each week.

Gazza Gossip to finish...you'd have thought living in the bummie hole of China would be the last we heard of The Belcher. No way, he was seen at a Newcastle Falcons' rugby union game in his hometown swigging the vino and puffing on cigars.

Quizzed as to what he was doing home, he replied that it was Chinese New Year Holiday and he had 10 days off. Bet the club that is paying him 400 grand a year is choking on that one. Nice training regime Gazza.

See you next week.
Premiership Bizarro



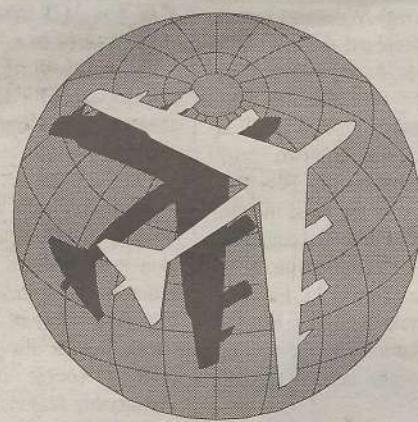
Premiership Bizarro

Fire sales all round! Footballing giants, Preston and Colchester, are trying any way they can to raise money for one more loan deal. Both clubs are auctioning David Moyes and Steve Whittens entire training wardrobe.

Rain jackets, smelly training shoes, smelly boots, stinky socks and well soiled jocks...any takers?...Go to the club web sites to find out more...can't see this one breaking records on Ebay.

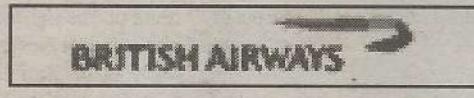
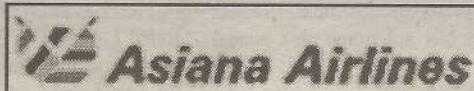
To catch Nige and Fergy on Premiership Bizarro, their internet TV show, go to www.bananatv.com

And click on Premiership Soccer. New episodes added each week. Don't miss it.



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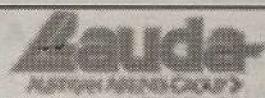
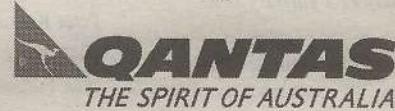
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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 22

	TOTAL							PTS	HOME					AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	BYE	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
PERTH GLORY	20	14	2	4	1	43	18	44	10	9	0	1	25	6	10	5	2	3	18	12
OLYMPIC SHARKS	21	13	3	5	1	42	28	42	11	9	0	2	21	9	10	4	3	3	20	19
NEWCASTLE UNITED	21	9	6	6	1	32	22	33	10	6	3	1	21	8	11	3	3	5	11	13
PARRAMATTA POWER	20	9	4	7	2	41	22	31	11	6	2	2	29	11	9	3	2	4	12	11
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	20	9	4	7	2	35	26	31	10	5	3	2	19	11	10	4	1	5	16	15
SOUTH MELBOURNE	19	8	4	7	2	28	27	31	11	7	3	1	22	12	8	1	1	6*	6	15
NORTHERN SPIRIT	19	8	3	8	2	26	33	27	10	5	1	4	17	18	9	3	2	4	9	15
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	20	6	6	8	2	34	43	24	11	5	2	4	18	23	9	1	4	4	16	20
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	21	5	8	8	1	23	34	23	10	3	5	2	11	15	11	2	3	6	12	19
BRISBANE STRIKERS	20	6	4	10	2	33	40	22	10	3	1	6	15	23	10	3	3	4	18	19
FOOTBALL KINGZ	20	5	6	9	1	19	33	21	9	2	5	2	9	10	11	3	1	7	11	23
SYDNEY UNITED	20	5	5	10	2	17	28	20	10	5	3	2	12	9	10	0	2	8	5	19
MARCONI STALLIONS	20	5	3	12	2	19	37	18	9	3	1	5	11	14	11	2	2	7	8	23

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 2

(C Pelosi 43', G Lozanovski 93')

SYDNEY UNITED 0

Referee: Angelo Nardi. Crowd: 1,982. Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium.

Teams: ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Acevski, Fyfe, Kovacevic, Pantelis, Veari, Vidmar, Lozanovski, Tunbridge, Kemp (Smeltz 77'), Pelosi, Aguero (Terminello 65').

Subs Not Used: Lagatt, Scarsella (gk).

SYDNEY UNITED: Ivesa, Cacic, Pavic (Markovic 78'), Bilokapic, Barrett (Jedinak 62'), Babic, Collina, Brain (Deur 46'), Cunico, Doumanis, Rudan.

Subs Not Used: Perosh (gk).

Cautions: A Vidmar (ACF) 75', L Brain (SU) 28', A Doumanis (SU) 46', P Bilokapic (SU) 92'.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1

(P Tsekenis 31')

SOUTH MELBOURNE 0

Referee: Eddie Lennie. Crowd: 7,157. Venue: Knights Stadium. Teams: MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: John, Vargas, Kovacic, Marth (Horvat 64'), Rocco, Buhic, Sabljak, Erdogan, Natsioulas, Fa'Arodo, Pelikan.

Subs Not Used: Jankovski, Batinovic, Hrehoresin (gk).

SOUTH MELBOURNE: Galekovic, Durakovic, Panopoulos, Coveny, Buljan, Susa (Clarkson 46'), Lia (Baird 79'), Tolios, Kisnorbo, Poutakidis, Damianos.

Subs Not Used: Pace, Anastasiadis (gk).

Cautions: H Fa'Arodo (MK) 67', N Tolios (SM) 23', P Kisnorbo (SM) 25', M Durakovic (SM) 26', V Coveny (SM) 28'.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



MARCONI STALLIONS 0

NEWCASTLE UNITED 1

(T Dodd 10')

Referee: Brett Hugo. Crowd: 1,984. Venue: Marconi Stadium.

Teams: MARCONI STALLIONS: Turnbull, Gibson, Webb, Costanzo, Longo, McDonald (Care 72'), Spiteri, Brosque, Casserly (Enes 33'), Sekulic, Thwaite.

Subs Not Used: Perinich, Alogdellis (gk).

NEWCASTLE UNITED: Beltrame, Bingley, Dodd, Wilson, Tsekenis, R Griffiths, Schirripa, Johnson, Middleby (Moreira 70'), Wheelhouse (Hughes 79'), Eagleton.

Subs Not Used: Mitchell, Willis (gk).

Cautions: T Sekulic (MS) 37', S Webb (MS) 39', A Brosque (MS) 40', R Griffiths (NU) 35'.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1

(S Lyons 26')

PERTH GLORY 6

(B Despotovski 32', 54' pen, D Mori 38', A Caceres 40', 60', N Mrda 84')

Referee: Con Diomis. Crowd: 3,132. Venue: WIN Stadium.

Teams: WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Crews, Austin, Stanton, Cervinski (Abel 78'), Castro (Huxley 78'), Lyons (Wells 86'), Heffernan, Farah, Allift, Menillo, Blake.

Subs Not Used: Whalan (gk)

PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Horsley, Harnwell, Gumprecht (Colosimo 74'), Miller (Byrnes 61'), Despotovski (Mrdja 58'), Junior, Mori, Price, Caceres, Tarka.

Subs Not Used: Matassa (gk).

Cautions: D Tarka (PG) 77'.

PARRAMATTA POWER 7

(K Salapasidis 53', 56', 80', J Buonavoglia 22', 48', P Cardozo 71', M Thompson 10')

FOOTBALL KINGZ 0

Referee: Simon Micallef. Crowd: 2,343. Venue: Parramatta Stadium. Teams: PARRAMATTA POWER: Reddy, Ceccoli, Beauchamp, Thompson (Maloney 50'), O'Sullivan (Zorbas 79'), Cardozo, Salapasidis, O'Grady, Buonavoglia, Renaud (Brown 62'), Elitch.

Subs Not Used: Vukovic (gk).

FOOTBALL KINGZ: Utting, Perry (Christie 55'), Jackson, Burton (Miyazawa 23'), Almendra, Vlahos, Ngata, deGregorio, Pritchett (Beldham 55'), Donoso, Anthopoulos.

Subs Not Used: Bannatyne (gk).

Cautions: A Ceccoli (PP) 28', W O'Sullivan (PP) 28', M Donoso (FK) 86'.

OLYMPIC SHARKS 2

(A Milicic 48' pen, F Parisi 85')

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3

(A Kwasnik 80', 86', A McDermott 90')

Referee: Craig Zetter. Crowd: 2,813. Venue: Toyota Park.

Teams: OLYMPIC SHARKS: Bolton, Juric, Srhoj, Podeljak, Milicic (Souris 78'), North, Harris (Parisi 71'), Porter, Caravella (Owens 76'), Durante, Ishida.

Subs Not Used: Hughes (gk).

NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Watts, Spencer, Tobin, McDermott, Ferguson, Macallister (Richter 85'), Hutchinson, Tomasevic (Kwasnik 74'), Petrie, Wilkinson.

Subs Not Used: Groves, Rex (gk).

Cautions: V Tomasevic (NS) 62', I Ferguson (NS) 65'.

KOSTA SALAPASIDIS

(Parramatta Power)

Any hat trick is worth mentioning, but when it came to the three goals scored by Parramatta Power's Kosta Salapasidis none could perhaps be more important in the overall scheme of things.

Coming off a rather average week when the Power could have picked up nine points but instead had to settle for a mere three, it was vitally important they hit back to put their finals ambitions back on track. Salapasidis chimed in with a second half hat trick, with goals in the 53rd and 56th minute before he rounded out Power's scoring with his side's seventh goal on 80 minutes.

Despite the drubbing handed out to the travelling Kingz, the game was a far more open contest with the Kiwi travellers performing far better than the scoreline would suggest. But a second half assault from Salapasidis and a neat attacking partnership with Pablo Cardozo and John Buonavoglia condemned the Kingz to the history books for all the wrong reasons, while pushing the Power to their first NSL final's appearance.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	15
GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle United	14
BUONAVOGLIA John	Parramatta Power	11
ROCHE Anthony	Brisbane Strikers	10
PELIKAN Anthony	Melbourne Knights	9
YOUNG Stuart	Wollongong Wolves	9
MILICIC Ante	Olympic Sharks	9
BROSQUE Alex	Marconi Stallions	8
SALAPASIDIS Kosta	Parramatta Power	8
PELOSI Claudio	Adelaide City Force	8
VAUGHAN Coveny	South Melbourne	8

BYE - BRISBANE STRIKERS

Melbourne Knights: 1 South Melbourne: 0

You Little Buhic



by Alan Clark

Leon Buhic scored the only goal of the Melbourne derby for the Knights after an error by veteran South Melbourne defender Mehmet Durakovic midway through the second half in a tight and passionate game at Knights Stadium on Sunday evening.

Knights deserved its victory over its local rivals, themselves seemingly unable to climb out of a poor spell of results in recent weeks in which just four points have been earned out of the last six games - three of them in an unconvincing win mid-week - scarcely form to enter the Finals with.

Knights' newly-appointed Director of Football Mirko Bazic provided the Knights' view at the post-match media conference. "We played very well, and had a couple of chances. But that is soccer - to score a goal after a big mistake."

Bazic has written off Knights' chances of making the Finals even though the maths have not. "No - it's impossible," he said. "We are finished. But we will still try for seventh position, or eighth."

Knights had the majority of possession in the derby, by far a greater shot-count - almost triple South's tally, and four times as many shots on target.

"We lacked discipline," said South coach Danny Wright after the game. "It was frustration, I suppose. We couldn't get our passing game going. The Knights pressed us and were going at a hundred miles an hour."

There had been some by-play between the coaches in the preceding week which

added to the hot-house derby atmosphere. Wright claimed Bazic had slighted his side, calling South "an average team" with players who are "good, but nothing special" only a short time after his return to Australia following a seven-year absence.

Knights' General Manager John Ovarcic attempted to soothe hurt feelings in his column in the match-day program, putting an alternative spin on Bazic's comments.

But the passion and commitment on the park was unabated.

Knights sprang from the blocks and Henry Fa'Arodo won the first of his battles with Patrick Kisnorbo as early as the eighth minute, leaving Kisnorbo in his wake, but shooting over with Buhic in space to his left.

Just after the first-half's mid-point, Nick Sabljak teased Nick Tolios on the left wing before sending in a cross, which Buhic met with a header, only for the ball to flash by the far post.

Referee Eddie Lennie was required to caution four South players in as many minutes shortly after. Fa'Arodo had been serially crunched by Kisnorbo and Durakovic, either side of bad tackles on Buhic and Bill Natsioulas by Tolios and Vaughan Coveny respectively. It seemed likely then that the passion would spill over, and that Lennie would be compelled to produce a red card, but the bad-tempered period passed and the first half ended without his further intervention.

There were interesting duels across the park. Fa'Arodo and Kisnorbo were well matched, and Kisnorbo's early booking made him more circumspect in his attentions, and a better player for it.

Andrew Marth, making his 250th appearance for Knights, and Coveny spent much of the game in each others' shadows. It was an engaging contest between these two national league stalwarts. Marth's historic game ended just after the hour when he was replaced by Steve Horvat in a direct exchange.

"In a lot of respects, it was a typical derby game," said Wright. "But we started in second-gear, and it was hard to get out of (it). We didn't compete at



Melbourne Knights striker Leon Buhic celebrates his strike against rivals South Melbourne in the keenly contested derby match.



Buhic shown closely marked by South defender Patrick Kisnorbo.

all in the first half."

"That forty-five minutes was our worst performance of the season, it was absolutely atrocious."

Knights' second half's pressure did not lessen. Within a minute of the re-start, Ante Pelikan had a shot which Eugene Galekovic did well to save.

Shortly afterwards Pelikan had combined in a flowing move with Fa'Arodo and Buhic but took overly-long to shoot and the South defence swarmed the ball clear.

It was an error by Durakovic which gifted Buhic the opening goal with twenty minutes to go. South played the ball along its back-line and Durakovic's attempt to flick it back to Galekovic, as Buhic pressed, was weakly struck. Buhic ran unchallenged towards goal as Galekovic came out to narrow the angle. Buhic side-stepped to open it again, and shot home from 12 metres.

"When we conceded that goal, we were as much in the game as we were all game," said a disappointed Wright. "It was an incredible mistake. It came out of the blue."

"At that point, a few of the (Knights) players were walking, and we'd looked like we had a bit of a go-along. But (after) the mistake, it lifted them - the

crowd got behind them, and they got strong from that point on."

Poutakidis managed a clearance off the line from a sharp Fa'Arodo shot just minutes later as Knights strove for a goal that would end the contest. The ball rebounded to the Solomon Islander but his follow-up shot hit the side-netting.

Wright sent on Michael Baird as a forward for Vince Lia in an effort to chase at least a point, and left his defence bare in the process.

Several times in the remaining minutes, cooler Knights' play might have brought a second, but Fa'Arodo, Buhic, and Pelikan separately and collectively managed to squander a hat-full of opportunities in the last five minutes.

"We took risks in the end," said Wright. "It's all about results, so we threw three up front. Full credit to Knights, they defended very well."



Anthony Pelikan shown tightly marked by South skipper Steve Panopoulos.

Insert: Henry Fa'Arodo: His match-up with South defender Patrick Kisnorbo was an outstanding part of the match.

(From The →) Dressing Sheds

By Mark-Stavroulakis

-It brings me great pleasure to arrogantly announce that we beat the English at their own game last week, three goals to one - what a game!

Like many fanatical Australian fans across the country, waking up to the morning bliss of watching our very own Socceroos take on the English was a sight that will not be forgotten for quite some time.

At one stage after waking up and switching on the tube, I thought it was all a dream, could this be possible? Australia were playing England at Upton?

I got my reassurance after seeing the kick-off and from then on the fairytale of watching these two sides go at it started.

As expected the match was played at a frantic pace also having possibly the best squad ever assembled with the likes of Kewell, Viduka, Lazaridis, Emerton, Schwarzer, Neill, Okon and co, Farina's men looked possessed for an upset win.

Big Tony Popovic, currently playing his trade in the Nationwide First Division with Crystal Palace kicked off the scoring proceedings after leapfrogging Manchester United's Gary Neville for the first goal of the match.

Hearing chants like 'Aussie Aussie Aussie - Oi Oi Oi' after the first goal to this day still rings in the eardrum.

One note that I'd like to add was the way Harry Kewell played. He danced past many of his familiar opponents and let's face it, made Arsenal defender Ashley Cole look like an amateur in some cases.

He clearly shut many critics mouths after beating 'Mr Peroxide' David James on a one on one situation that sent the many Aussie fans in hysterics.

Sven Goran Eriksson's men were clearly outclassed and stunned at the rate the Australians played.

That's not to say that the English didn't have a few chances through Michael Owen and a disallowed goal to Paul Scholes, everyone knew though that massive changes were going to be seen during the second half.

A whole new England line-up showed up for the second period and if I'm not mistaken, it was as if I was watching an U21 Poms line-up.

The future is certainly bright for the English who boast many quality players in Wayne Rooney, James Beattie, Frances Jeffers who scored the only goal for the Brits, Frank Lampard but unfortunately they faced an ever-determined Roo side.

All was over for our rivals when Feyenoord star Brett Emerton notched up the third and final goal of the game to grant the Aussies a first win on

English soil.

To beat a country that first created the game in front of their own fans was a victory the Australians will surely not forget.

The message was clear, the Aussies taught the Poms a few new lessons.

Not only have we beaten our fellow rivals in Union, League, Tennis and the Cricket, but Football can now be added to the ever-growing list.

Those Australian fans that had the chance to witness this memorable match will no doubt never forget this.

Watching the large Aussie contingent in the stands, hearing shouts of 'Bull****' and 'We won the Cricket' certainly had the goose bumps showing.

as Farina adds another scalp into the bag.

Having scored victories over Brazil, France and now England, the next assignment for Big Bad Frank would be qualification.

The way his boys played last Thursday morning, qualification is surely shoe-in.

-A match between the two rivals isn't really a match without a streaker. During the second half a brave Pom braved the chilly conditions at Upton Park and did the famous run around the pitch much to the amazement of many of the Socceroos, especially keeper Mark Schwarzer.

however was on the receiving end of a red card during last Wednesday's re-scheduled match against South Melbourne in Melbourne.

Tagawa was dismissed for a crude tackle on Nick Tolios that infuriated the South players.

"It was a stupid send-off. He didn't have to (react) like that. It was his second game, and probably his last as well. We've only got three

left - he's suspended next week. We may as well give somebody else a go we'll wait and see," said coach John Kosmina.

The Strikers had spotted Tagawa playing for Tahiti in the Confederations Cup and signed him for the remainder of this season.

have had on a certain young Australian soccer player currently playing his trade in Italy.

Empoli midfielder Vince Grella is currently being scouted by the Milan giants and sources close to the 23-year-old have stated that something could eventuate in the not too distant future.

Not bad for a player who many thought would not make the jump to international football.

-Sydney United's talented young midfielder Anthony Doumanis certainly had something to shout about a few weeks back.

The former Joey was United's hero as his 87th minute goal gifted his side a valuable point against last year's Grand-Final winners.

What made that goal even sweeter was the fact that it was against his old club.

It was reported that Doumanis had a fall-out with coach Gary Phillips at the time thus promoting his exodus.

Many irate Olympic fans were however upset about the way Doumanis celebrated after his goal with a few supporters stating that he incited a fight with his actions.

In all fairness, when a player scores against a former club then obviously the feeling would unreal.

It happens across the globe with many ex-stars scoring goals against former sides followed by out-there celebrations.

-Newcastle United coach Ian Crook has had it quite tough this season in terms of picking the same eleven on a weekly basis.

Injuries and suspensions have hammered the side since kick-off back in September and unfortunately it doesn't seem to stop there for the Novocastrians.

At the moment, injuries to Michael Prentice (ankle-out for season), Scott Baillie (hip), Milan Blagojevic (calf), Chris Zorich (foot), Andy Roberts (thigh), Adam Griffiths (foot) and Joel Griffiths (ankle) have all but disturbed preparations for Crook's side.

It was quite a nightmare for the side last week who not only had injuries to players, but suspensions to Esala Masi and Scotty Thomas while youngster Keegan Wolfenden gained an U17 call-up, a total of 10 players sat out of the squad.

-Still on Newcastle, it appears that Brazilian ace Alex Moreira has proved to be a big hit in his new found area.

Having signed on from the Force early last year, Moreira has settled in quite well with the locals and has made a number of new fans.

It's all in the samba style!!

ROUND 23

FRI. 21 FEBRUARY 2003

Newcastle United —
Parramatta Power
Northern Spirit —
Adelaide City Force

SAT. 22 FEBRUARY 2003

Perth Glory —
Olympic Sharks

SUN. 23 FEBRUARY 2003

Football Kingz —
Brisbane Strikers
Sydney United —
Melbourne Knights
South Melbourne —
Marconi Stallions

Bye - Wollongong Wolves

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Starting this week, 'From the Dressing Sheds' will be displaying a photo of the week concentrating on the lighter side of football.

This week we show-case the new look

Brazilian line-up, no guesses as to which new stars the side have acquired for the up & coming international season.

The side recently drew nil-all to China, a miserable result for the first timers.

Thursday February 13 2003 will long be remembered as the day, the 'so-called' convicts took it to the motherland.

As a proud Australian I'd like to show my gratitude in congratulating the side and its officials for a brilliant result - here's to more brilliant results in the near future!

-It's been reported that National League club the Olympic Sharks could return to their normal roots next season in a bid to ignite the club's crowd attendances.

Ever since the club made its move to the Sutherland Shire region, crowd averages have dropped and unfortunately new crowd has not been seen.

The club went through a whole new face change with both the name and logo of the club taking a different stance.

Leichhardt Oval has been targeted as the new venue for the squad next year while rumors have circulated that the original name of 'Sydney Olympic' could return along with its famous logo symbolising the Olympic rings.

-One must now think that Socceroo coach Frank Farina's position as the country's number should well be safe now.

Talks a few months back between Dominic Galati and the much-travelled Bora Mulinovic should be put to rest

Australian fans yelled out "You fat bastard, you fat bastard", to the streaker wearing a union jack g-string.

I've got to give to the crazy larrikin, braving these abnormal conditions and dashing away from a number of officials - play of the day in my book I say!

-ABSW's roving eye, in this case our very own advertiser Ben Moring was present at one of the local places in Sydney that show-cased the big match.

Situated in the picturesque setting of Cockle Bay Wharf, hundreds of green and gold supporters gathered to 'One World Sport' to witness the match that brought a smile to every Australian soccer fan across the country.

"The feeling of seeing hundreds of Australian fans smiling after recording this huge victory was amazing. The message is clear, soccer has arrived in Australia," stated Moring after the event.

-Just a statistic too add more gleam to Aussie supporters, England are ranked 8th in the world on the FIFA charts while the Aussie's WERE 50th. After this win, a jump is surely on the cards.

-Spare a thought for Tahitian international Felix Tagawa.

The new Brisbane Strikers striker was on song on his first match against the Power scoring a brilliant looping header

-One keen observer at Bob Jane Stadium last Wednesday alerted ABSW to a bizarre occurrence that happened between South Melbourne and the Brisbane Strikers.

Brazilian import Fernando Rech was subbed in the 62nd minute for youngster Joshua Rose and it was reported that Rech, infuriated by the move disregarded the Strikers bench and went straight for the dressing sheds.

Could there be a rift between player and coach???

-The Marconi Stallions have already started re-building for next season in the coaching department as caretaker coach and current Football Operations Manager Rale Rasic stated to ABSW that FIVE coaches have already shown a keen interest in taking over the side.

Rasic's words to ABSW were clear, "I have no intention in coaching Marconi, I'm purely an operations manager. I will however recommend various coaches towards the board upon their decision."

Good news at Bossley Park is that youngster Alex Brosque, striker Joe Spiteri and newly signed Luke Casserly are all staying on with the club for a further year.

-You've all probably heard about the recent interest Italian giants AC Milan

ROUND 24

FRI. 28 FEBRUARY 2003

Adelaide City Force —
Perth Glory —
Wollongong Wolves —
Olympic Sharks —
Marconi Stallions —
Sydney United

SATURDAY 1 MARCH 2003

Parramatta Power —
South Melbourne —
Brisbane Strikers —
Newcastle United

SUNDAY 2 MARCH 2003

Melbourne Knights —
Northern Spirit —

Bye - Football Kingz



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003

MATCH OF THE ROUND

C'bury-M'ville Olympic	0
Belconnen Blue Devils	1

By Paul Goodwin

We were flat, exclaimed Canterbury's Assistant Coach Stan Ackerley after his sides 1-0 home loss at the hands of Belconnen Blue Devils in Thursday nights catch up game at Henson Park. On a day when another more famous

home side was also beaten and looking for excuses, after being humbled by an underdog at Upton Park, there was no lack of respect being shown for their opponents by this coaching team.

Indeed, Berries coach Greg Woodhouse had admitted before the game that it would be a tough one for his men, who were so buoyant after their resounding 3-0 win at Parramatta Eagles

Melita Stadium the previous Sunday.

Woodhouse knew that Belconnen was a hard side to beat, but did his players?

They appeared to play well within themselves throughout and with Belconnen always looking the hungrier of the two teams from the start, perhaps they somehow felt that a point would suffice?

It wouldn't.

The last ten minutes saw both sides attacking relentlessly, each threatening to catch the other out on the counter-attack.

Canterbury had begun the game without ace striker Andy Amegashie, who once again was left on the bench after arriving late at the ground.

He eventually came on early in the second period and looked very dangerous, but he spurned one good chance inside the box and looked more interested in showing off his ball skills in the middle of the park than allowing his predatory instincts in the box to do the talking.

Stout defending by Belconnen and some intelligent counter-attacks led to the visitors claiming victory in the 87th minute.

Defender Adrian Dowling set off on a surging run through the middle and then, after reaching the final third, he laid off a perfect pass to Daniel Macor on the left of the area.

Macor had both a difficult angle, and a capable custodian, in Ivan Necevski, to deal with but his finish was all class and even if the keeper did get a hand on the ball there was no stopping it finding the net.

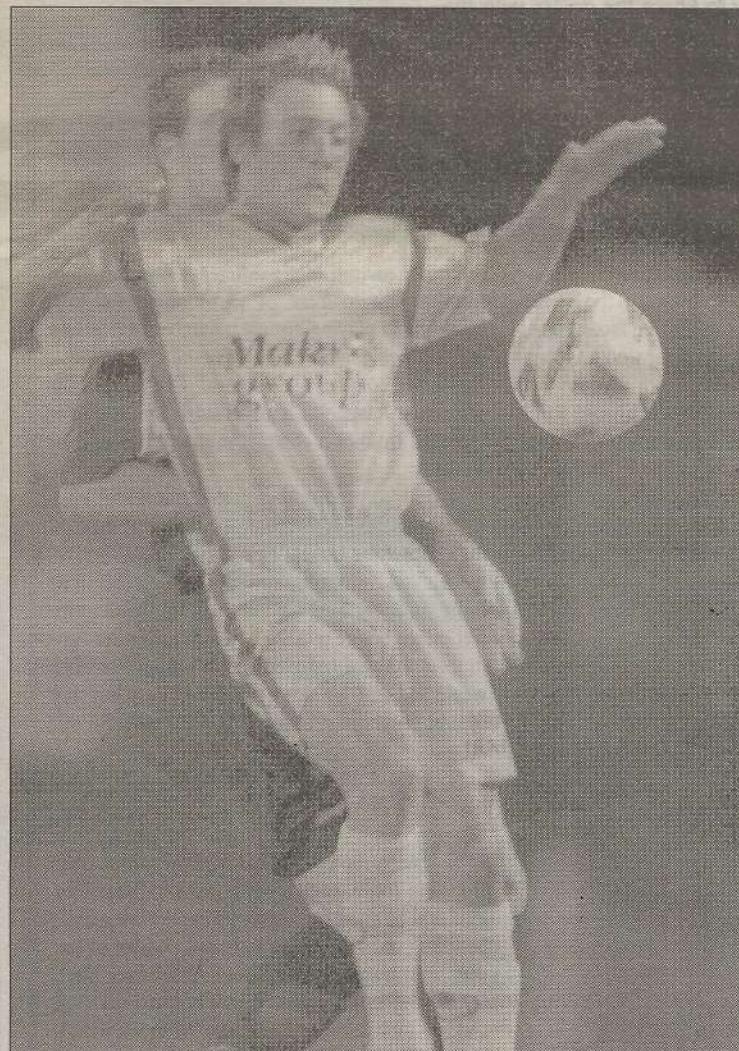
For the third year in succession the Blue Devils had come to Henson Park and kept a clean sheet.

Furthermore, they had also taken the win on each visit, a fitting way for goalkeeper-captain Tony Giannasca to celebrate his 50th game for the Canberra club.

For Canterbury Necevski made many fine saves, but so too did Giannasca whose anticipation was keen, as were the instincts of all of his team mates.

Canterbury had a chance to go equal top with a win here. Instead they remain among a throng of top five candidates.

As Woodhouse also said before the game, I wish we could improve our home form; its shocking!



Leigh Gunn works hard to bring the ball down.



David Arranz (right) beats Allan Picken (left) as John Kyriazopoulos watches on.

C'BURY-M'VILLE OLYMPIC BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 1

(D Macor 87')
at Henson Park, Marrickville

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE OLYMPIC: 1 Ivan Necevski, 2 Sasha Utjesenovic, 4 Cormack Begley, 5 Tom Maric (8 Shane Ceverini 77), 13 Ben Price, 6 Paul Bourke, 11 Aheleas Kotsopoulos (14 Andy Amegashie 55), 10 Allan Picken (C), 18 John Kyriazopoulos, 12 George Nohra, 9 Leigh Gunn (15 Michael O'Riley 64).

Subs not used: Mike Gibson (RGK)

Coach: Greg Woodhouse

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: 1 Tony Giannasca, 2 Adrian Dowling, 4 Lee Pietruski, 12 Valerio Galleotti (17 Stephen Kemp 78), 5 Oscar Zamora, 7 Mike Katz, 8 Elliot Zwangobani, 13 Stewart Camara, 10 Daniel Macor, 11 David Arranz, 14 Marco Perinovic (15 Matt Valeri 26).

Subs not used: Francois Bangweni (RGK), 6 Jaime Mauro.

Coach: Lino Fiorese.

Referee: Vic Gauci.

Assistant Referees: Michael Collins and David Bradshaw.

Fourth Official: Peter Apostolou.

Yellow Cards: Canterbury-Marrickville: Allan Picken 38, Aheleas Kotsopoulos 52, Tom Maric 74
Belconnen: Nil

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EDITING: Adam Mark
PRODUCTION: Daniel Kuziow, Elly Vea,
Mary Quartly
WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin,
Graham Cooke, Barry Davis
PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Furtado,

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SOCER NSW
Valentine Sports Park
235-257 Meurants Lane,
GLENWOOD, NSW, 2768
Phone: (02) 9629 1800
website: www.soccernsw.com.au

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Belconnen Blue Devils

3

Bankstown City Lions

3

By Graham Cooke

There was a pre-match presentation to Devils captain and goalkeeper Anthony Giannasca for his completion of 50 games in the NSW Premier League, but if the home supporters were expecting the party to continue after the first whistle, they were sadly disappointed.

For most of the game Belconnen looked like losing the longest unbeaten home run in the competition, and while they stormed back to dominate the second half after going 3-1 down, they had to wait until the 85th minute for Danny Macor's equaliser.

Bankstown, now with three wins and a draw from four games, are not playing like a side in the bottom half of the table, and coach George Fernandez may not be unduly optimistic when he said that with half the season left, a finals birth is not out of the question.

On Sunday night's form, the player who could make the difference for the Lions is Alex Asanovic. Slightly built but with a blistering turn of pace he set up the goal for the bustling Robert Gomez and scored one himself in the first half, and if he faded in the second it was more because the team generally decided to defend the lead and left him with few options up front.

Asanovic had already seen Giannasca make

a reaction save from his shot when he sent Gomez away in midfield. The chunky striker burst through the centre of the defence and picked his spot perfectly to open the scoring.

Bankstown did not have to wait long for their second, a free kick which Damien Luksic smashed into the net from closer range, and it was left to defender Adrian Dowling, with a long, hopeful drive from well outside the penalty area, to beat Zlatko Josevski for his first goal for the club, and put the Devils back in the game.

But before half time Bankstown had restored the two-goal lead, a fine solo effort by Asanovic who first sent Dowling the wrong way, then resisted the challenge of Lee Pietrukowski to slip the ball past Giannasca.

Perhaps the Lions should have rode their fortune and gone on with it in the second half, instead they elected to defend the lead - a dangerous practice which came unstuck early when George Issa, under pressure, pushed the ball past his own goalkeeper.

The Devils bombarded the visitors' goal after this. Twice the ball was in the net, twice offside, but in between Macor got the one that counted and Belconnen have still not been beaten at their new McKellar Ground, or by anyone in this competition since January 2002.

Bankstown did themselves no favours, playing the last 13 minutes with 10 men when Bryan Raeburn was sent off for a second

cautionable offence.

Fernandez said afterwards the team had come looking for the win, "but we are a long way from home and I'll take the point," he said.

Equally, Devils coach Lino Fiorese was unhappy. "We need to win at home, and we have thrown away a chance of going third in the

league," he said.

"Playing Canterbury on Thursday night was a factor. We were slow starting, and now we have to buckle down to some hard games over the next few weeks if we want to be in the finals."



Blue Devils coach Lino Fiorese lucky to share the points with the Bankstown City Lions.

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS .3

(A. Dowling 30', G. Issa (og) 50', D. Macor 85')

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS .3

(R. Gomez 13', D. Luksic 22', A. Asanovic 43')

at McKellar Soccer Centre, McKellar

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: 1 Anthony Giannasca, 2 Adrian Dowling, 4 Lee Pietrukowski, 5 Oscar Zamora, 7 Michael Katz (9 Clinton Larfield 46), 8 Elliott Zwangobani, 10 Daniel Macor, 11 David Arranz, 13 Stewart Camara, 15 Matthew Valeri (Jaime Mauro 73), 18 Andy Rakic. Coach: Lino Fiorese

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: 1 Zlatko Josevski, 2 Damien Luksic, 3 Elias Augerinos, 4 Bryan Raeburn, 5 Richard Luksic (14 Paul Wearne 26), 6 Chris Bradley (12 Robert Issa 58), 7 Alex Asanovic, 8 Glen Moore, 9 Robert Gomez (10 Alex Trpkovski 78), 13 George Issa, 15 Fernando de los Santos. Coach: George Fernandez

Referee: Bill Simeonovic

Assistant Referees: Ned Sparks, Michelle Treloar

Fourth Official: Graeme Vines
Yellow Cards: Belconnen Blue Devils: Andy Rakic 45+3, David Arranz 81, Danny Macor 90+4. Bankstown City Lions: George Issa 26, Bryan Raeburn 65, Fernando de los Santos 69, Elias Augerinos 90+4.

Red Card: Bankstown City Lions: Bryan Raeburn 77. Crowd: 400.

FROM THE SIDELINES By Greg Stock

*It may have been a "free weekend" for Premier league clubs but not for the Coasties. In order to get his players mind back on the job, coach John McLafferty organised a compulsory indoor five-a-side competition for Saturday afternoon, in which players of both grades participated. Teams consisting of six players were organised and a very competitive competition resulted. The team consisting of Fleming, Cutler, Binskin, Quilty, Preston and Murrell convincingly won the final and were crowned "Club Champions".

"It was a great afternoon," said McLafferty. "The players put in a lot of effort and more importantly the team bonding continued and our two past defeats should not be on their minds for the match against Rockdale."

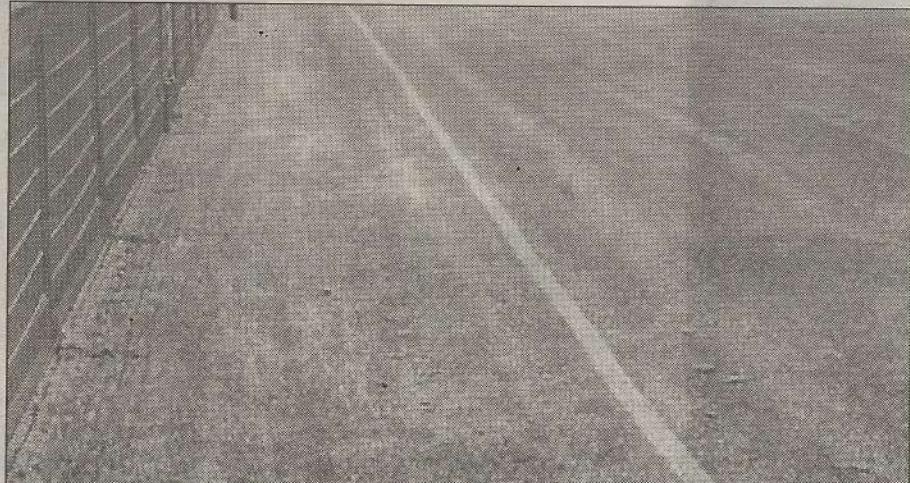
McLafferty himself will never forget the previous Saturday at Bonnyrigg. His team not only suffered an humiliating defeat, but when he arrived home about midnight, he found a gang of Gosford Council workers digging up his driveway outside his house. Apparently a water main had burst while he was away at soccer. It wasn't the noise of the jackhammers that upset him, it was the fact that he had only put down a brand new concrete driveway over the Xmas holidays!! As some sort of consolation the local council is going to pay for the cost of a new driveway. And so they should!

The mid-season break has been a godsend to the Coasties as Daniel Surridge is suffering with a cracked bone in his thumb and David Brewer and Captain Pat Bradley have been suffering from a virus all week and none would have been able to play this weekend. Hopefully all will be OK for the Rockdale match.

*A final reminder for fans of the Fraser Park Dragons, with 'corporate' tickets are selling fast for the friendly match against NSL club side Northern Spirit at Kogarah Oval this Saturday. For \$40 you get food, drinks and a great evenings entertainment with the main game kicking off at 5.45pm.

All ticket enquiries to Timberline Quality Furniture at 354 Railway Parade Carlton (ph 9588 7055) or via Ian Baddock on 0412 298737.

*State coach Greg Woodhouse has started mapping out the preparation for the NSW state side ahead of their clash with Victoria on March 9th. The side will be training at Glenwood every Wednesday night at 7pm with a practice game against Schofields Scorpions pencilled in for February 26th.



"Schofields have offered to host us for a match and a dinner after the game" said Woodhouse.

"It should be a good opportunity for a serious hitout on the park and build a bit of team comrade-off the park." The itinerary for the match involves the side flying down early that morning to return directly after the match. The major cause for concern being that all the squad members will have club commitments on the 8th with Woodhouse waiting until the last minute before naming his sixteen man squad for the trip south.

*Canterbury stopper Tom Maric faces an anxious week after suffering a possible broken elbow

in his sides 1-0 loss to Belconnen last Thursday night. Having forced his way back into the Berries starting eleven after a foot injury, the break comes at a bad time for the young defender who was starting to hit top form.

"He went for x-rays late last week" said coach Greg Woodhouse, "and we are waiting to hear back from the specialist to see what the extent of the injury is." Canterbury also has midfielder George Nohra nursing a bruised knee with striker Andy Amegashie troubled by an ankle injury. Defender

and experiencing life in a different culture. Coming from an environment of part-time to full-time training and playing against a number of overseas imports was fantastic and something that I look forward to continuing next year." Currently in the offseason, Ravanello is expected to return to the U.S. and trial for a contract in the next couple of weeks.

*Parramatta Eagles striker Tim Gledhill is pushing coach John Calleja hard for a recall. The former Hajduk Wanderers striker scored 6 goals in an 8-0 romp over Hils United in a trial game two weeks ago before picking up 2 against Fraser Park in their 4-1 win last week. That's 8 goals in two weeks and with his side's indifferent form last start against Canterbury, could he be the answer?

*Enigmatic Belconnen striker Ivo De Jesus has been released by the club.

*A hearty bon voyage to fellow scribe Paul Goodwin for his well earned holiday to Singapore. Paul will be away for nigh on two months, and will be filling us in on the exploits of a number of former state league players while he is over there. Deputising in his absence will be Stuart Veitch, and we look forward to his contributions for the remainder of the PL season.

*A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers announces that long time club stalwart Alex Rigby passed away at his home last Tuesday. The club will have 1 minute silence in the next home game.

Mr Rigby's funeral will be on Friday 21st February at 11.00 am at St David's Church, Dalhousie St, Haberfield.

For further information, contact Vice Aiello on Mobile: 0418 498 689
Phone: (02) 9865 5257
Fax: (02) 9893 8782
Vince.Aiello@team.telstra.com



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ROUND 8/9 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

Rescheduled Round 8

Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic	0
Belconnen Blue Devils	1

(D Macor 87')

Rescheduled Round 9

Belconnen Blue Devils	3
(A Dowling 30', own goal 50', D Macor 83')	

Bankstown City Lions 3 |

(R Gomez 13'/43', D Luksic 22')

UNDER 19

Rescheduled Round 8

Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic	2
(R Earp 8', B Boardman 25')	

Belconnen Blue Devils 2 |

(S Lacey 53', S Mehr 85')

Rescheduled Round 9

Belconnen Blue Devils	2
(S Mehr 16'/29')	

Bankstown City Lions 0 |

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	11	6	4	1	22	11	22
Blacktown City Demons	11	6	2	3	19	14	20
C/bury M/ville Olympic	11	5	4	2	16	9	19
Central Coast Coasters	11	5	3	3	17	21	18
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	11	5	2	4	22	17	17
Parramatta Eagles	11	4	5	2	15	10	17
Belconnen Blue Devils	11	4	5	2	17	14	17
Rockdale City Suns	11	4	3	4	21	19	15
Bankstown City Lions	11	4	2	5	16	20	14
Penrith Panthers	11	3	3	5	15	14	12
St George Saints	11	2	0	9	9	24	6
Fairfield Bulls	11	1	1	9	12	28	4

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	11	9	2	0	42	10	29
Parramatta Eagles	11	7	3	1	23	9	24
Rockdale City Suns	11	7	2	2	22	14	23
Penrith Panthers	11	5	4	2	19	12	19
Belconnen Blue Devils	11	4	5	2	20	13	17
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	11	5	2	4	20	17	17
C/bury M/ville Olympic	11	4	3	4	24	20	15
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	11	3	2	6	12	19	11
Central Coast Coasters	11	2	4	5	11	26	10
St George Saints	11	1	3	7	8	20	6
Fairfield Bulls	11	1	2	8	8	31	5
Bankstown City Lions	11	0	4	7	8	26	4

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 12 FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Belconnen Blue Devils	Sat 22 Feb	7.00pm	Serbian Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v C'bury-M'ville Olympic	Sat 22 Feb	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Central Coast Coasters	v Rockdale City Suns	Sat 22 Feb	7.00pm	Pluim Park
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v Fairfield Bulls	Sun 23 Feb	6.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Penrith Panthers	Sun 23 Feb	6.00pm	St George Stadium
Parramatta Eagles	v Bankstown City Lions	Sun 23 Feb	6.00pm	Melita Stadium

UNDER 19

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Belconnen Blue Devils	Sat 22 Feb	5.00pm	Serbian Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v C'bury-M'ville Olympic	Sat 22 Feb	5.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Central Coast Coasters	v Rockdale City Suns	Sat 22 Feb	5.00pm	Pluim Park
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v Fairfield Bulls	Wed 9 April	7.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Penrith Panthers	Sun 23 Feb	4.00pm	St George Stadium
Parramatta Eagles	v Bankstown City Lions	Sun 23 Feb	4.00pm	Melita Stadium

TOP GOALSCORERS

- 10 — Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns)
- 8 — Zlatko Arambasic (APIA-Leichhardt),
- 6 — Aaron Burgess (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Robert Todorovski (Rockdale City Suns), James Monie (Central Coast),
- 5 — Marko Perinovic (Belconnen Blue Devils), Colin Luff (Blacktown City/Bankstown City), Simon Catanzaro (Blacktown City), Shane Knight (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Daniel Macor (Belconnen),
- 4 — Luke Roodenberg (Blacktown City), Danny Hinton (Penrith Panthers), Daniel Kukucka (Parramatta Eagles), Paul Bourke (Canterbury-Marrickville),
- 3 — Rod Hutchinson (Penrith Panthers), Ante Moric (APIA-Leichhardt), Steve Karavatakos (APIA-Leichhardt), Matthew Borg (Fairfield Bulls), Nathan Rivera (Parramatta Eagles), Josh Maguire (Central Coast), Leigh Gunn (Canterbury), Clinton Larfield (Belconnen Blue Devils), Michael Hawrysiuk (Bonnyrigg), Bruno Beddomi (St. George), Andy Amegashie (Canterbury), Daniel McCann (Penrith Panthers), Robbie Gomez (Bankstown), Damien Luksic (Bankstown),
- 2 — Allan Picken (Canterbury-Marrickville), Marc Hoenselaars (Fairfield Bulls), Ben Deighan (Rockdale City Suns), Ben Delicata (Parramatta Eagles), Sean Matthews (Central Coast), Robert Angievski (Bonnyrigg White Eagles/Fairfield Bulls), Marc Falzon (Central Coast), Alex Asanovic (Bankstown City), Sasha Utjesenovic (Canterbury-Marrickville), Kain Rastall (Blacktown City), David Harding (Bonnyrigg), Djone Valle (Blacktown City), Marcus Stergiopoulos (APIA-Leichhardt), Bryan Raeburn (Bankstown),



SOCER NSW



ROUND 12 PREVIEW



Bonnyrigg White Eagles vs Belconnen Blue Devils



Saturday 22nd February, 2003 — 7.00pm
SERBIAN CENTRE, BONNYRIGG

After dropping their round nine clash with Blacktown City, the White Eagles have made every post a winner, knocking over Fairfield 3-1 before smashing the Coasties at home 7-2.

Coach Ljube Jancev has not rested in his bid to challenge for the title, dipping into the transfer market to secure the services of forward Rob Angievski from the Bulls.

Midfielder Freddy Umlil is back from trials in Europe and comes into the squad to replace the suspended David Harding while defender Fernando Pellegrino is also expected to be included after recovering from a

strained side, which kept him out of the Coasties game. The player to watch this week is undoubtedly Shane Knight who has been on fire in recent weeks culminating in a two-goal haul against the Coasties.

Belconnen came through their two game assignment with flying colours, four points from a maximum of six a great reward for a side who are really starting to mount a serious challenge.

Adopting a more defensive style away from home, they took everything that Canterbury could dish out last Thursday, waiting patiently till the final few minutes before coming away with a nail-biting 1-0 win.

Back in front of their home crowd coach Lino Fiorese is expected to play a more attacking game, with midfielder Nic Purdue in line for a start. Sadly striker Marko Perinovic will be missing with their hopes in front of goal resting on the shoulders of Daniel Macor.

In their two previous away trips to The Serbian Centre, the Blue Devils have been beaten twice, 2-1 and 3-2, and are still ruing the missed points from round one when they allowed a 2-0 half-time lead to turn into a 2-2 draw. Expect this game to be a hard fought affair with the home side to get home in a close one.



Central Coast Coasties vs Rockdale City Suns

Saturday 22nd February, 2003 — 7.00pm
PLUM PARK, LISAROW

At the turnaround point, the Central Coast Coasties in the lofty heights of fourth position. But the hounds are barking at their heels with Bonnyrigg, Belconnen, and Parramatta all on 17 points and their opponents this week, Rockdale City Suns, three points afar on 15.

In round 1, the Coasties caught the Suns out with a 2-0 victory at John Crehan Park. It was an inauspicious welcome to the NSW Premier League for the Suns, who may have been suffering from fatigue after a strenuous Winter Super League campaign, when they conceded their

goals and the boys are sure to have vivid memories of that evening in Cringila when they make the trip north. Since that match, the Suns have established themselves as bona fide Premier League material with a solid performances, including holding the current league leaders A.P.I.A. Leichhardt to a one-all draw under controversial circumstances in Round 8.

Co-coaches Mile Todorski and Bill Pilovski have created squad of hardened professionals with Spase Najdoski leading the charge up front as the Premier League's top goalscorer with 10 of the club's 21 goals this

season. The form of Richard Plesa and Malcolm Bideau at the back has proved quite resilient through the first 11 Rounds, and the creativity of Denis Ailiovic the Coasties will not be seeing the same team that they faced in the season opener.

John McLafferty has had a dream run in his first season as the Coasties First Grade coach. With a lot of youth and a sprinkling of experience, the Coasties have been very competitive, but have had a couple of momentous brain explosions against the stronger clubs.

My prediction for this week a high scoring draw.



St George Saints vs Penrith Panthers

Sunday 23rd February, 2003 — 6.00pm
ST GEORGE STADIUM, ROCKDALE

Unfortunately for the Panthers, it has been a long slide since they got out the blocks quickly with a dominant 3-1 victory over the Saints in Round 1.

Due to their superior fitness and strength, Penrith has traditionally started the seasons strongly, but this time the points haven't been flowing as freely. Unlucky to lose points against the Coasties at Plum Park in round 4, Penrith have been competitive with the top teams, but haven't been able to find the killer blow to take maximum points.

The loss of Peter Bennett to Singapore has a left somewhat of a

hole in the Penrith engine room. The filling of that hole has been a weekly job, with Daniel McCann about the only one who has come close. The form of Jason Sciberras has been consistent throughout and is definitely a player who will fire in the latter part of the season.

Meanwhile, back at the St George ranch, things have not been rosy for coach Manny Spanoudakis. With injuries and absentees aplenty, fielding a strong squad each week has been a job that would give a small marsupial a brain hemorrhage. The addition of Abbas Saad to the line-up has proved experience and quality.

but alas as the tyranny of age creeps into the former Socceroo and NSL star's life, the ability to consistently last 90 minutes week in week out also been an issue.

The addition of former St George junior Vince Savoca and the return of Sebastian Sinozic may help turn the fortunes of the Saints in the remaining 11 matches. A curious point has been the revolving door in the goal keeper department with Con Anastasiadis, Phil Weston and Michael Xuereb all sharing the custodial duties.

For mine a Panthers victory most likely.



A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers vs Fairfield Bulls

Sunday 23rd February, 2003 — 6.00pm
LAMBERT PARK, LEICHARDT

Chalk and Cheese is probably the best way to describe the second match-up between these two teams.

Before the start of the season, both were discussed as title contenders. Fairfield was coached by Craig Sharpley and had a veritable who's who of NSW Premier League talent on the books. The 3-3 season opener was a fantastic fixture which left supporters of both clubs salivating at the prospects, but that is where the comparisons ended.

Fairfield lost 9 of the following ten fixtures and in the process lost Coach Sharpley and a host of players.

The spectre of relegation is now looming over the Nineah ground.

A.P.I.A. on the other hand have gone from strength to strength and are the benchmark that all other teams are judged upon. Apart from a slight hiccup going down to Bankstown in Round 10 and getting out of jail against Rockdale with a late penalty equaliser in round 8, the Tigers have rarely been troubled and are deserving of their top ranking.

With the assemblage of talent such as former Socceroo, Zlatko Arambasic, Ante Moric, Bobby Catin and Andrew Clarke, coach Les de Celis may have finally found a

squad worthy of going all the way to the title. The fortuitous pick-up of former Marconi and Sydney Olympic striker, Norman Tome, during the Bankstown City Lions fire sale means that there is some serious competition for the striking position.

Fairfield incumbent coach, Sam Isaac will need a miracle this week to avert a blow-out. Mathew Borg is yet to really fire this year with only 3 goals with his partner in crime, Marc Hoenselaars with only 2 to his name.

Unfortunately for the Bulls, I don't see a revelation occurring this weekend, especially at Lambert Park. Expect a goal fest for the Tigers.



St George Saints vs Penrith Panthers

Sunday 23rd February, 2003 — 6.00pm
ST GEORGE STADIUM, ROCKDALE

Unfortunately for the Panthers, it has been a long slide since they got out the blocks quickly with a dominant 3-1 victory over the Saints in Round 1.

Due to their superior fitness and strength, Penrith has traditionally started the seasons strongly, but this time the points haven't been flowing as freely. Unlucky to lose points against the Coasties at Plum Park in round 4, Penrith have been competitive with the top teams, but haven't been able to find the killer blow to take maximum points.

The loss of Peter Bennett to Singapore has a left somewhat of a



Parramatta Eagles vs Bankstown City Lions

Sunday 23rd February, 2003 — 6.00pm
MELITA STADIUM, SOUTH GRANVILLE

After looking to have all the hallmarks of a genuine top three side, the Eagles went out against the Berries last start and promptly shot themselves in the foot.

The 3-0 loss is still a cause of great soul-searching at the club with coach John Calleja putting it down to just 'one of those days.'

"Our form leading up to that game had been solid and there was nothing different in the way we prepared for the game either" said coach John Calleja.

The only player causing any concern in the camp is Nathan Rivera

who is troubled by a groin injury. Calleja and his assistant coach John McKie face an agonising week before naming a replacement for defender Paul O'Grady who has been picked up by Parramatta Power.

"We have a couple of options," said Calleja. "We could promote John Kelso or we could move Matty O'Shea back to stopper and tinker with the midfield, either way we face a tough decision." The Eagles weren't idle over the break, playing two trial games against Fraser Park (4-1 win) and MSC Liverpool (1-0 win) with striker Tim Gledhill starring in both games.

Bankstown on the other hand took the road trip to Canberra and came away with an equal share of the points. Unbeaten in their past four starts which includes three wins, they have started to gather some serious momentum, a win this week putting them right back into top five calculations.

When these two sides clashed in round one, the Eagles got away with a 2-1 win. In six previous visits at Melita Stadium, they have only won just once and with that statistic confirming their home ground superiority the tip is for the home side to return to the winners circle quite comfortably.



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE SEASON 2003

**ROUND 1**

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Manly Warringah	v Ryde City	Saturday 01-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Cromer Park	
Hajduk Wanderers	v Sydney University	Sunday 02-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Hajduk Stadium	
Fraser Park Dragons	v Stanmore Hawks	Sunday 02-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Fraser Park	
Dulwich Hill	v H'ville City CS	Sunday 02-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Arlington Oval	
AC United	v MSC Liverpool	Sunday 02-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Abruzzi Oval	
H'ville City Minotaurs	v Sutherland Sharks	Sunday 02-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Rockdale Ilinden SG	
BYE	v Macarthur Rams						

ROUND 2

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Sutherland Sharks	v AC United	Saturday 08-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Seymour Shaw	
Macarthur Rams	v Manly Warringah	Sunday 09-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Lynwood Park	
Stanmore Hawks	v Hajduk Wanderers	Sunday 09-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Arlington Oval	
H'ville City CS	v Fraser Park Dragons	Sunday 09-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	TBA	
MSC Liverpool	v Dulwich Hill	Sunday 09-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Hammondville Oval	
Ryde City	v H'ville City Minotaurs	Sunday 09-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Magdala Oval	
Sydney University	v BYE						

ROUND 3

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Manly Warringah	v H'ville City Minotaurs	Saturday 15-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Cromer Park	
Macarthur Rams	v Sydney University	Sunday 16-Mar-03	10:00am	12:00pm	2:00pm	Lynwood Park	
Hajduk Wanderers	v H'ville City CS	Sunday 16-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Hajduk Stadium	
Fraser Park Dragons	v MSC Liverpool	Sunday 16-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Fraser Park	
Dulwich Hill	v Ryde City	Sunday 16-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Arlington Oval	
AC United	v Stanmore Hawks	Sunday 16-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Abruzzi Oval	
BYE							

ROUND 4

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Manly Warringah	v Sydney University	Saturday 22-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Cromer Park	
Sutherland Sharks	v Fraser Park Dragons	Saturday 22-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Seymour Shaw	
Stanmore Hawks	v Macarthur Rams	Sunday 23-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Arlington Oval	
Macarthur Rams	v Hajduk Wanderers	Sunday 23-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Hammondville Oval	
Hajduk Wanderers	v Dulwich Hill	Sunday 23-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Magdala Oval	
Fraser Park Dragons	v Ryde City	Sunday 23-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	Rockdale Ilinden SG	
Dulwich Hill	v AC United	Sunday 23-Mar-03	1:00pm	3:00pm	5:00pm	BYE	

ROUND 5

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Manly Warringah	v AC United	Saturday 29-Mar-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Cromer Park	
Macarthur Rams	v H'ville City CS	Sunday 30-Mar-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Lynwood Park	
Sydney University	v Stanmore Hawks	Sunday 30-Mar-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Wentworth Park, Glebe	
Hajduk Wanderers	v Sutherland Sharks	Sunday 30-Mar-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Hajduk Stadium	
Fraser Park Dragons	v Ryde City	Sunday 30-Mar-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Fraser Park	
Dulwich Hill	v H'ville City Minotaurs	Sunday 30-Mar-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Arlington Oval	
AC United	v MSC Liverpool	Sunday 30-Mar-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Rockdale Ilinden SG	
BYE							

ROUND 6

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
MSC Liverpool	v Macarthur Rams	Sunday 06-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Hammondville Oval	
H'ville City CS	v Sydney University	Sunday 06-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	TBA	
Stanmore Hawks	v Manly Warringah	Sunday 06-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Arlington Oval	
Ryde City	v Hajduk Wanderers	Sunday 06-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Magdala Oval	
H'ville City Minotaurs	v Fraser Park Dragons	Sunday 06-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Rockdale Ilinden SG	
AC United	v Dulwich Hill	Sunday 06-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Abruzzi Oval	
Sutherland Sharks	v BYE						

ROUND 7

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Macarthur Rams	v Sutherland Sharks	Sunday 13-Apr-03	10:00am	12:00pm	2:00pm	Lynwood Park	
Sydney University	v MSC Liverpool	Sunday 13-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Sydney Uni Oval No 1	
Stanmore Hawks	v H'ville City CS	Sunday 13-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Arlington Oval	
Hajduk Wanderers	v H'ville City Minotaurs	Sunday 13-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Hajduk Stadium	
Fraser Park Dragons	v Ryde City	Sunday 13-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Fraser Park	
Manly Warringah	v Dulwich Hill	Sunday 13-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Cromer Park	
BYE	v Ryde City						

ROUND 8

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Macarthur Rams	v Ryde City	Saturday 19-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Lynwood Park	
Sutherland Sharks	v Sydney University	Saturday 19-Apr-03	2:00pm	4:00pm	6:00pm	Seymour Shaw	
MSC Liverpool	v Stanmore Hawks	Saturday 19-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Arlington Oval	
H'ville City CS	v Manly Warringah	Saturday 19-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Hammondville Oval	
AC United	v Hajduk Wanderers	Saturday 19-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Abbruzzi Oval	
Dulwich Hill	v Fraser Park Dragons	Saturday 19-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00pm	3:00pm	Arlington Oval	
BYE							

ROUND 9

Team	v Team	Date	Kick-Off	U19	U21	First Grade	Ground
Macarthur Rams	v H'ville City Minotaurs	Monday 21-Apr-03	11:00am	1:00			



PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE SEASON 2003

**ROUND 1**

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
Blacktown City	v	Parramatta Eagles	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:45	10:00	11:15	12:45	2:30		Gabbie Stadium
Marconi Stallions	v	A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Marconi
Sutherland Shire	v	Bankstown City Cubs	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Seymour Shaw
Sydney United	v	Newcastle United	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Sydney United SC
Central Coast	v	Northern Spirit	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Plum Park
Southern Branch YL	v	Olympic Sharks	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		South Nowra
Penrith Panthers	v	Wollongong Wolves	Saturday 1/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Doug Rennie Field

ROUND 2

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
Northern Spirit	v	Sydney United	Saturday 8/03/2003	8:45	10:00	11:15	12:45	2:30		Christie Park
Bankstown City	v	A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	Saturday 8/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Jensen Park
Marconi Stallions	v	Blacktown City	Saturday 8/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Marconi
Newcastle United	v	Sutherland Shire	Saturday 8/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Seymour Shaw
Olympic Sharks	v	Central Coast	Saturday 8/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Plum Park
Penrith Panthers	v	Parramatta Eagles	Saturday 8/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Lysagts RG
Wollongong Wolves	v	Southern Branch YL	Saturday 8/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Doug Rennie Field

ROUND 3

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	v	Newcastle United	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Lambert Park
Marconi Stallions	v	Bankstown City Cubs	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Marconi
Sutherland Shire	v	Northern Spirit	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Seymour Shaw
Sydney United	v	Olympic Sharks	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Plum Park
Central Coast	v	Penrith Panthers	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Melita Stadium
Southern Branch YL	v	Parramatta Eagles	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		South Nowra
Blacktown City	v	Wollongong Wolves	Saturday 15/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Gabbie Stadium

ROUND 4

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
Northern Spirit	v	A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Christie Park
Newcastle United	v	Marconi Stallions	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Macquarie Field
Bankstown City	v	Blacktown City	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Jensen Park
Sutherland Shire	v	Olympic Sharks	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Plum Park
Wollongong Wolves	v	Penrith Panthers	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Lysagts RG
Parramatta Eagles	v	Southern Branch YL	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Doug Rennie Field
Penrith Panthers	v	Blacktown City	Saturday 22/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Gabbie Stadium

ROUND 5

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	v	Olympic Sharks	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Lambert Park
Marconi Stallions	v	Northern Spirit	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Marconi
Bankstown City	v	Newcastle United	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Seymour Shaw
Sutherland Shire	v	Wollongong Wolves	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Plum Park
Sydney United	v	Parramatta Eagles	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Melita Stadium
Central Coast	v	Penrith Panthers	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		South Nowra
Blacktown City	v	Southern Branch YL	Saturday 29/03/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Gabbie Stadium

ROUND 6

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	v	Wollongong Wolves	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Lambert Park
Marconi Stallions	v	Marconi Stallions	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Marconi
Newcastle United	v	Blacktown City	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Seymour Shaw
Parramatta Eagles	v	Sutherland Shire	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Plum Park
Penrith Panthers	v	Sydney United	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Melita Stadium
Southern Branch YL	v	Central Coast	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		South Nowra
Northern Spirit	v	Blacktown City	Saturday 5/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Gabbie Stadium

ROUND 7

Team	v	Team	Date	Kick-Off	U12	U13	U14	U15	U17	Ground
Parramatta Eagles	v	A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	Saturday 12/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Lambert Park
Wollongong Wolves	v	Marconi Stallions	Saturday 12/04/2003	9:00	10:15	11:30	1:00	2:45		Marconi
Olympic Sharks	v	Bankstown City	Saturday 12/04/2003	9:00	10:15</					



SOCER NSW



PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE PREVIEW 2003

By Barry Davis

Well, here we go again! It seems like the last season finished only a couple of weeks ago and here we are on the threshold of a brand new season. So what can we expect this time around? Who will emerge as Champions and who will be the wooden spooners? We will need to wait twenty-six weeks for the answers but in the meantime it is certain that we will see skills, thrills and spills aplenty.

Without doubt, this is the best competition for junior players in Australia and it traditionally produces top quality football from superbly talented youngsters. There is every reason to believe that 2003 will continue to provide enough first-class soccer to satisfy the most severe critic as well as provide a plethora of pleasure for the players, parents, coaches, managers and the various club officials. There will, of course, also be moments of high drama, controversy and heartbreak but that is all part and parcel of high level competition.

Every club will be thinking that they are stronger than last season and their hopes will be high. All will be hoping for a better showing than the one they produced last year. Only time will tell whether those dreams will be realised or dashed.

This will be the first season of the revised format for the competition and that will create great interest in each and every match result. For the first time the U/12s are a part of the Youth League structure, although that applies only for season 2003 as the age group will revert to the control of the local Associations from 2004. It will also be the last season for the U/17 age group as the competition will revert to U/16s in 2004 and U/18s will be added.

Olympic Sharks will be very keen to continue the form that saw them crowned Club Champions last season. They are always among the front-runners and their on-going success attracts many talented players to them. They are sure to have selected the very best talent available and will continue to be a major force this year. However, since they are the reigning champions everyone else will lift their game performances in an attempt to knock them off.

That could mean that they will be in for a tough time from the outset when they will travel to South

Nowra to take on the ever-improving Southern Branch. South Nowra has rarely been a happy hunting ground for Sydney based teams as they find it difficult to earn points there. A part of the reason for that is that the Southern Branch youngsters are among the most committed in the competition due to the extraordinary distances they must cover each week for training and matches. They also have an excellent development programme in place that helped them to stay in the top flight last year. Expect to see them show a big improvement in the coming season.

Blacktown City Demons were far from pleased

Northern Spirit have always been hard to beat as they have an abundance of talent available to them. Although they are traditionally among the front-runners their trophy cabinet has been a little bare in recent times so they will undoubtedly strive for a much improved showing. Christie Park provides them with a strong home ground advantage and now they will be wanting to make sure they are earning majority points from all their away games.

Their first test will come in the first round when they will meet Central Coast Coasties at Plum Park. The Lisarow based club will have been disappointed with their placing in the lower half of the

teams but they may have some surprises for us this year.

Rumour has it that Penrith Panthers have attracted a number of players for this season and they could provide a few shocks for their opponents as the season progresses. Their region also has a large talent pool and hopefully the Panthers will have taken full advantage of that.

They will be tested in the first round when they meet Wollongong Wolves at the Doug Rennie Field. The Wolves will be relying heavily on drawing players from the strong Illawarra resources and they can be expected to earn a better placing than their mid-table showing last season.

Sutherland Shire Sharks finished in the lower half of the combined table last year but they will be expecting a big improvement this season. Sydney's largest Association has talent to burn and if some of those have found their way to the Harry Dening Centre, the Sharks will once again become a force to be reckoned with.

Premier Youth League newcomers Bankstown City Cubs will face the Sharks in the first round and that should be a real test for both clubs. Bankstown may find the early going a little tough as they learn to adjust to the increased demands imposed by this level of competition. While they may be confident after winning promotion from Super Youth League last season, that may not be enough to see them through.

Sydney United have, until recent years, produced many players who have gone into the senior levels of the game with considerable success. However, that does not seem to be the case at the moment and they will need to address that issue as a matter of urgency if they are to be a real force this season. We have heard that they are stronger than last season and that they are optimistic about the season.

Newcastle United will be their first opponents for the new season and the outcome will provide some clues about what the season has to offer them both. The Newcastle United shattered the Super Youth League last year, winning the overall competition by a record margin, and that could stand them in good stead for this year. However, they will be facing a much tougher standard at this level of play.



It's that time of year again when the NSW Premier Youth League kicks-off.

with their second-placing in last season's club championship after they had claimed the title for the previous three years. They are expected to be there-or-thereabouts at the business end of the season as they rarely have difficulty in attracting top quality players to their ranks and they maintain a keen interest in maintaining their own high standards.

Parramatta Eagles will face the Demons in the first round and the outcome will be of major interest. The Eagles remain linked to Manchester United and their overall player development programme reaped huge benefits for them last season as they grabbed third place overall in the very last round of the competition. They have always been a force at this level and it is unlikely that anything will change this year as they will be eager to grab the top spot.

combined table last year and they are sure to have dug deep into the local player pool to unearth the talent that will see them produce greater consistency. With only one other Youth League outfit competing for the players in their region the Coasties should be able to field very competitive teams in 2003.

Marconi Stallions are another club who consistently draw from the very best of the local players and that has helped them to remain near the top of the top echelon for many seasons. There is every reason to believe that will continue to be the case for the Boscombe Park based outfit.

They will host old rivals A.P.L.A. Leichhardt in the first round of the season and there is bound to be a great deal of interest in the results on the day. The Tigers always have one or two very competitive



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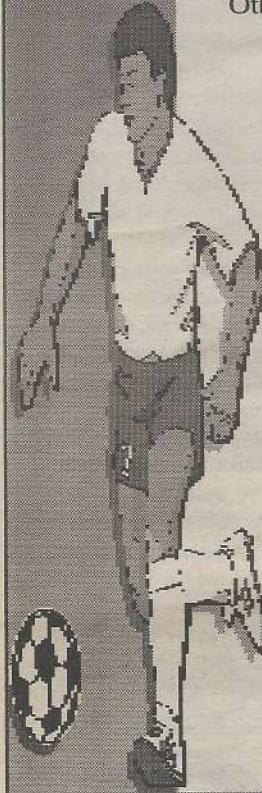
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J-P's Coaching Tips

Hi Everyone,

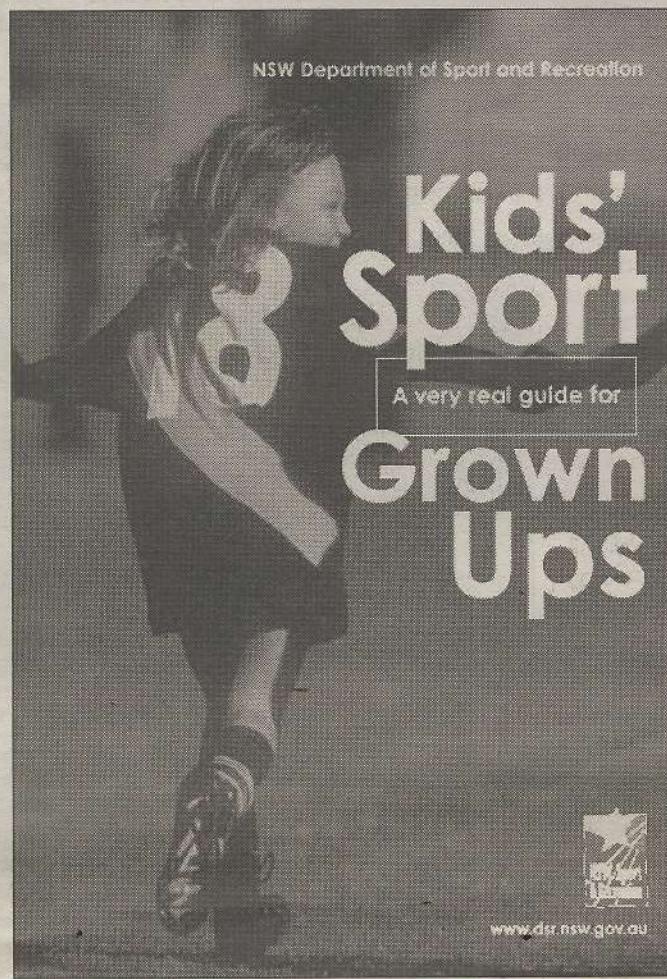
I don't know about you, but I'm still on cloud nine after the Socceroo's pumped England last week. Frank did a great job of organising his squad, whilst Sven obviously underestimated gold old Aussie determination and hunger. It is interesting to note that all three goal scorers for the Socceroo's were from NSW (Tony Popovic, Harry Kewell & Brett Emerton), so I guess we are doing something right!

Whilst talking about National teams, a big congratulations to Jacob Timpano (Former NSWIS and now at Wollongong Wolves) who was named captain of the Joeys team for the U17 Oceania qualifiers. Also to Eric Paatalu (current NSWIS) who was named as Jacob's vice captain. The Joeys have got off to a great start, and all going well will be in Finland from 13-30 August 2003 for the FIFA Under-17 World Championship.

With the start of the winter soccer season about to kick-off, this week's tip is on a topic that can cause major headaches for a first time, and also the experienced, junior and youth coach: How to deal with parents.

Believe it or not, I have known coaches who have spent as much time "coaching parents" as they do with players. There are a couple of parent types that need extra special attention. You all know the ones that I am talking about.

I have also known other coaches who have not selected extremely talented players in certain teams because their parents were "high maintenance" and as a result would have made the task of coaching the



This handbook for Parents of Sporting children is available from the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation website www.dsr.nsw.gov.au

team difficult. This is not a common occurrence, but has happened in the past.

In the early years of playing sport, participation is more important than competition. It should be about enjoyment and learning. Losing is an important part of this learning process

and how a player deals with the loss will not only help them become a better player, but also a better person. Parent's need to be aware of how to best help their child deal with these situations to assist that process.

As a coach, it is also important to lay down the ground rules early.

Parent's need to understand that as a coach you are in charge of the team, and if they instruct their child independently of your instruction, they are undermining your authority and creating conflict in the mind of the child. Not a position any child (or adult) would like to be in at all.

Like anyone, we all make mistakes. If a parent has a serious issue or problem with what you do as a coach, encourage them to talk with you quietly and privately.

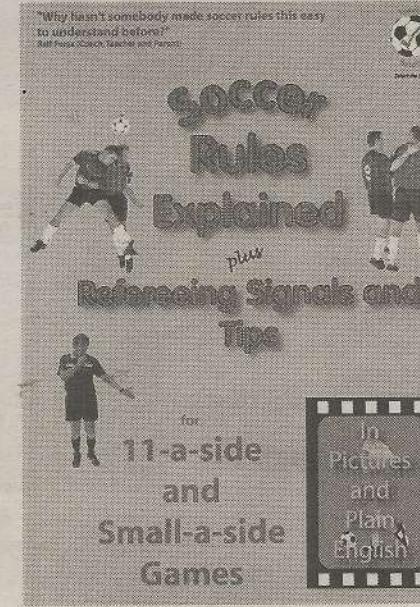
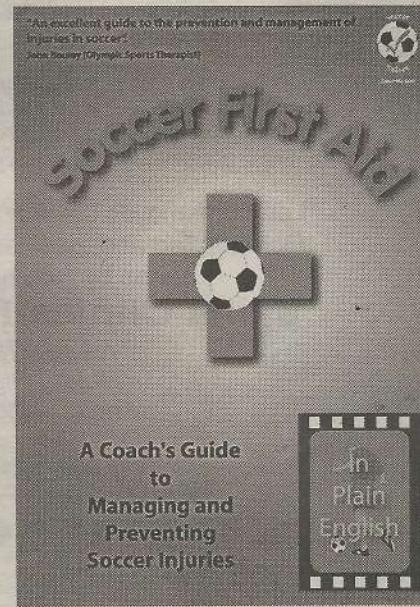
Kid's are pretty smart and know if you are giving special treatment to someone because of pressure from a particular parent. A Soccer team is just like a family. Communication between everyone will help the team work together as a unit.

The NSW Department of Sport and Recreation have produced a guide for parents of sporting children called: "Kid's Sport - A Very Real Guide for Grown Ups". It is available from the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation website (http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/publicat/p_detail.asp?Pub_id=21), and I recommend that parent's and coaches read this before the new season starts.

If you take a little bit of time to educate the parent's you can guarantee that the season will be more enjoyable and successful as a result.

That's all for this week,
Until next week,
Happy coaching

Jean-Paul de Marigny
Coaching and Development
Manager,
Soccer NSW



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ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

It is hard to go past Australia's amazing victory over England at Upton Park in London for news of the week. It was a superb performance from a team that thoroughly deserved to win.

However, how long can Vince Grella and Mark Bresciano be left out of the starting line-up? Both are playing in the Serie A, arguably the most difficult league in the world, yet they are considered only as benchwarmers for Australia.

In last week's friendly game the only weakness for Australia was in midfield. Josip Skoko, of Belgium club Genk, was partnered with Paul Okon of Leeds Utd. Skoko was returning from injury and wasn't his usual self but Okon was his usual self – average.

The issue at stake is whether or not Grella should permanently replace Okon in the midfield? The answer would appear to be in the affirmative.

Grella is currently one of the best players for mid-table Empoli and none other than Juventus and AC Milan have noticed his form.

There is speculation that he will leave little Empoli for one of these giants in the summer. Juventus and AC Milan are clubs that are known for spotting talent when they see it. It is hard to fathom therefore that he is not good enough for Australia's starting eleven.

Okon on the other hand was pulled out of the footballing wilderness by Leeds at the start of the year because of his good rapport with former Socceroo coach, and current Leeds Manager, Terry Venables.

Only in recent weeks has Okon been able to force himself into the weakened Leeds lineup. While he is generally a reliable player, it is hard to recall any really outstanding games he has had in the green and gold.

When it comes to Socceroo selection there appears to be two schools of thought. The first says that the best eleven should always be picked for Australia. The second says that younger players should be blooded and given international experience with the 2006 World Cup in mind.

Grella qualifies on both accounts. However, he appears to be denied a starting place by Frank Farina on the first school of thought. Surely Grella represents better value on current form than Okon.

Using the second school of thought then it is hard to see that Okon will still be amongst the best eleven players for Australia in 2006.

A similar argument could also be made for Bresciano. While his season with Parma got off to a rather slow start, he now seems to be regular in their starting lineup.

Bresciano plays for one of the best clubs in the Serie A which is surely worth a lot more weight when considering his form. The other players that Farina seems to prefer in the middle of the park play their trade in Belgium, Switzerland and Holland.

Looking good in those leagues is fine but you cannot compare them to Italy's Serie A. With all due respect to those other European leagues, the Serie A is miles ahead of them in terms of standard. Only the English Premier League and Spain's Primera Liga can truly rival the Serie A.

Farina more than anyone else should realise this. He was a star in Belgium with Club Brugge, was top goalscorer and was voted the 'Best Foreign Player in Belgium.' However, when he transferred in 1991 to Serie A minnows Bari he was a dismal failure who was sent packing within two months of arriving.

We could also mount a similar argument for John Aloisi who is playing in Spain with Osasuna. Perhaps he could be part of a three-prong strikeforce with Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka. Then again given Viduka's form in the green and gold, Aloisi may represent better value up front and a stint on the bench may be a good wakeup call for Viduka.

Soccer Australia is starting to talk about using London as a base for home games, which is a really great initiative, but it should also send Farina to Europe for longer and more regular periods so that he can truly monitor all of his players. How can a national coach be based in Sydney when all of his players are in Europe?



Andrea Pirlo and Robert Stankovic vie for possession.

PARMA 1 JUVENTUS 2

Juventus stole a march at the top of Serie A with an 2-1 victory away to Parma on Sunday.

The Bianconeri added to the pressure on their

rivals thanks to first-half goals from Marco Di Vaio and Alessio Tacchinardi.

Adrian Mutu ensured a nervous finish for the visitors with his 90th-minute strike but the Turin giants held on.

ATALANTA 0 UDINESE 0

Udinese remain in sixth place after being held to a goalless draw by Atalanta at the Atleti Azzurri d'Italia stadium on Sunday.

Luciano Spalletti's team were unable to find the winning combination in a match where the home team had the best chances to acquire the three points.

A more needy Atalanta will be disappointed with the draw, which does little to ease their relegation concerns.



Alvaro Recoba (right) of Inter holds off Simone Perrotta of Chievo Verona.

REGGINA 4 COMO 1

Reggina hit back from a goal down to trounce fellow strugglers Como 4-1. Nicola Caccia put Como ahead after just 10 minutes but Reggina hit back with two goals in five minutes from Francesco Cozza to take a 2-1 half-time lead.

Reggina then wrapped the game up with two goals in the final 10 minutes from Stefano Aimo Diana and Mozart.

EMPOLI 1 PERUGIA 1

Empoli battled back to earn themselves a valuable point in their clash against Perugia at the Carlo Castellani stadium.

Perugia took an early lead after just five minutes thanks to a goal from striker Zisis Vryzas.

However, Empoli showed their fighting spirit and two minutes later drew level through Marco Carparelli, the striker taking advantage of a defensive error from Mauro Milanese to net the equaliser.

PIACENZA 3 BOLOGNA 1

Piacenza put a run of four successive defeats behind them by beating Bologna 3-1. A Dario Hubner penalty set them on their way in the 18th minute.

Enzo Maresca scored in the 39th minute and Cirio de Cesare added a third in the 61st minute.

Claudio Bellucci scored in the 83rd minute for the visitors, but it was little consolation for a Bologna side who have now gone seven games without victory.

TORINO 1 MODENA 1

The spoils were shared in the game between relegation rivals Torino and Modena. After a goalless first half, Modena took the lead on the hour mark through midfielder Omar Milanetto.

But Torino are in desperate need of points after starting the day in bottom place and hit back just three minutes later to equalise through Simone Vergassola.

CHIEVO 2 INTER 1

On Saturday, indiscipline had cost league leaders Inter Milan dearly as they crashed 2-1 to Chievo.

Inter conceded both goals from the penalty spot and were a man short for more than half the match after their Turkish midfielder Okan Buruk was sent off for abusive language.

The one bright spot for Inter was that their Italian international striker Christian Vieri scored his 100th

Serie A goal.

But Chievo, in fifth place and firmly in contention for a place in next season's Champions League, didn't escape unscathed.

Midfielder Eugene Corini, who scored both their penalties on 19 and 36 minutes, also received a red card near the end for a second bookable offence.

Vieri got his goal on 69 minutes, but 10-man Inter couldn't force an equaliser.

ROMA 0

BRESCIA 0

Brescia earned themselves a dogged point from a 0-0 draw at the Olympic stadium after frustrating a Roma side who continue to disappoint.

In a first-half punctuated by a scrappy midfield battle, it took until the 41st minute for the first real chance of note.

Brescia almost profited from Roberto Baggio's cross on the hour mark but Luca Toni's angled shot nicked a post, much to the relief of Roma goalkeeper Ivan Pellioli.

AC MILAN 2

LAZIO 2

Substitute Filippo Inzaghi inspired AC Milan to a second-half comeback that clinched them a draw in a pulsating match against Lazio at the San Siro.

Roberto Mancini's side raced into a two-goal half-time lead thanks to Dejan Stankovic and a Claudio Lopez penalty.

But Inzaghi came on in the interval and proceeded to rain on Lazio's parade, scoring in the 62nd minute and then setting up Rivaldo for the equaliser.

FIXTURES

Sunday 23 February 2003

Lazio v Atalanta
Modena v Chievo
Bologna v Empoli
Como v Juventus
Torino v Milan
Perugia v Parma
Inter v Piacenza
Brescia v Reggina
Udinese v Roma

Chievo 2 - 1 Inter Milan, AS Roma 0 - 0 Brescia, Atalanta 0 - 0 Udinese, Empoli 1 - 1 Perugia, Parma 1 - 2 Juventus, Piacenza 3 - 1 Bologna, Reggina 4 - 1 Como, Torino 1 - 1 Modena, AC Milan 2 - 2 Lazio.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	21	13	6	2	38	15	45
Inter Milan	21	14	3	4	43	22	45
AC Milan	21	13	4	4	38	16	43
Lazio	21	10	9	2	37	21	39
Chievo	21	11	4	6	31	20	37
Udinese	21	9	6	6	21	20	33
Parma	21	8	7	6	36	26	31
Perugia	21	8	5	8	26	28	29
Roma	21	7	7	7	32	29	28
Bologna	21	7	7	7	25	25	28
Empoli	21	6	6	9	25	29	24
Brescia	21	5	9	7	24	28	24
Atalanta	21	5	7	9	23	32	22
Reggina	21	6	4	11	22	37	22
Modena	21	6	4	11	15	30	22
Piacenza	21	4	4	13	19	35	16
Torino	21	2	7	12	13	36	13
Como	21	1	9	11	14	33	12



ENGLISH



An English Odyssey

By Stuart Jones

Welcome back to another week of English football. In a week that saw the national team disgrace themselves with a 1-3 loss to Australia it was up to the domestic game to show there was some pride left in English football.

The foreign legion at Arsenal took revenge on the many local boys of Manchester United with a 2-0 defeat at Old Trafford in the FA Cup on Saturday. Goals from Edu and Wiltord made it a very comfortable affair on the scoreboard for the league leaders.

Referee Jeff Winter was berated by Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger throughout the match and he may have felt that unfair as the match was fiery indeed.

In other FA Cup matches Southampton defeated Norwich 2-0 and Sheffield United defeated Walsall by the same scoreline. Watford won one for the first division as well thanks to a 1-0 win over Sunderland.

Gary Neville has come out in the press this week and made it clear where his first allegiance lies. He has stated that his club, Man Utd, comes before playing for his country.

There is a growing debate in the UK about the number of matches being played and Neville stated until the matches are reduced he loves playing for England but United are his first priority.

Alen Boksic looks set to leave Middlesbrough early as he negotiates a pay out from the club to leave teeside. He has already announced his retirement when a bid came in from Tottenham, one that was knocked back (again, poor Spurs fans), and looks set to either retire or play on the continent, perhaps back in his native Croatia.

Leicester City may be no longer if new chairman John Holmes has his way. He does not like the fact 15 clubs in England are known as City and is looking to revert Leicester to Leicester Fosse, the name the club were known as until 1919.

He has asked the supporters for their opinion but so far they have been against the idea. It seems a nice idea but supporters these days are very averse to change.

Nottingham Forest have denied a link to former England player David Batty. Forest boss Paul Hart was once on the staff of Batty's current club Leeds but a spokesperson at Forest stated this week that Batty was never even on there wanted list.

Good news for York. It looked like their match against Hartlepool this weekend was to be there last but a mystery backer (don't you love them?) has paid administrators enough money to keep the club going for another seven days.

There are some bids on the table for the club at present so a delay in their closure was essential. It is not known how close the club are to gaining a backer to get them out of administration though.

A quick check of Division three sees the aforementioned Hartlepool runaway leaders nine points clear of second placed Rushden and Diamonds.

Bournemouth hold the other position that means automatic entry into division two but there is only a win between them and Bury, Torquay, York, Wrexham, Scunthorpe and Lincoln with Oxford and Kidderminster just a point behind that pack.

It is really tight in that range and several of those sides have fixtures in hand, some up to three. At the bottom the two relegation spots means the battle for survival in the league is also tight.

Bristol Rovers, Exeter and Macclesfield are all on 28 points with Carlisle on 30 and Shrewsbury, Boston and Swansea on 31. Again many of these teams have various games in hand.

Nicolas Anelka has retired from international football – at the age of 23. Many are not sure France will miss him as he has failed to secure a regular starting position for his country anyway.

In relation to things French Steve Marlet has said he may leave Fulham as the club is embattled in drama behind the scenes.

It seems the new modern Fulham picture is falling apart and Marlet may not be the only departure in the summer.

See you all next week when we will once again leave the victorious shores of Australia and revisit the vanquished shores of English football.



Harry Kewell scored in Leeds United's win over Crystal Palace.

FA Cup 5th Round Wrap

Goals from Edu and Sylvain Wiltord ended Manchester United's FA Cup dreams for another season as Arsenal claimed a hard-fought 2-0 victory at Old Trafford.

The defending champions became the first side to reach the last eight of this year's competition, but they were helped by the miss of the season from Ryan Giggs. With the score goalless after Ole Gunnar Solskjær had earlier hit a post, Welsh winger Giggs inexplicably failed to roll an 18-yard shot into an open goal, bringing up memories of Ronnie Rosenthal's miss at Aston Villa for Liverpool. And as the United players and fans tried to come to terms with what they had just seen, Sir Alex Ferguson's side fell behind to Edu's deflected 25-yard free-kick on 34 minutes.

The Brazilian's curling shot

flicked off David Beckham and left Fabien Barthez stranded in the United goal to send the travelling Arsenal fans wild.

Arsenal, who were without both Thierry Henry and Dennis Bergkamp at kick-off, then doubled their lead seven minutes into the second period, when a lovely through ball from Edu set Wiltord into space, before the Frenchman skipped away from two defenders to roll the ball past Barthez.

Watford sprung the surprise of the FA Cup fifth round by beating Premiership strugglers Sunderland 1-0 at the Stadium of Light but their victory was not without controversy.

The visitors were awarded a penalty in the 65th minute after Heidar Helguson became sandwiched between Jody Craddock and Michael Gray while contesting a cross and referee Mike Dean pointed to the spot.

Tommy Smith stepped up but drilled his shot straight down the middle of the goal and Thomas Sorensen saved with his legs, only for Dean to spot an

FIXTURES

SATURDAY 1 MARCH 2003

Newcastle United v Chelsea

West Ham Utd v Tottenham Hotspur

Blackburn Rovers v Man City

Fulham v Sunderland

Middlesbrough v Everton

Southampton v West Bromwich Albion

SUNDAY 2 MARCH 2003

Arsenal v Charlton Athletic

MONDAY MARCH 3 2003

Aston Villa v Birmingham City

WEDNESDAY MARCH 5 2003

Man Utd v Leeds United

encroachment by the Sunderland players and order a re-take.

Smith took on the responsibility once more and slotted home despite Sorensen almost getting a hand to it.

It was poor fare at the Stadium of Light with few chances created and the closest the home side came to scoring was Kevin Phillips' first-half 30-yard strike which went just wide.

Michael Proctor had a chance to snatch a replay deep into injury-time but from a difficult chance five yards out he could not shoot over the crossbar.

Southampton's Premiership class saw them through with a 2-0 victory over First Division Norwich but not before they had been given a stern examination.

Goalless at half-time after Brett Ormerod had hit the post in the fourth minute, the visitors could have gone in front midway through the second half but Paul McVeigh saw his shot bounce back off the inside of the post.

However, from that effort Southampton counter-attacked and Anders Svensson knocked home the opening goal in the 71st minute.

Three minutes later new England cap James Beattie was replaced by Jo Tessem and within 30 seconds he had scored the second after Chris Marsden's shot bounced back off Green.

Norwich's misery was complete when captain Malky McKay dragged down Ormerod and was sent off for a second bookable offence.

Sheffield United put themselves into the draw for the sixth round with a 2-0 win over Walsall.

They led 1-0 at half-time thanks to Tommy Mooney's goal but the highly-rated Michael Brown was the man who pulled all the strings.

It was Brown's shot which Saddlers' keeper James Walker could not hold and Mooney was on hand to stab home from close range.

Brown was the creator for the second too as he wriggled his way into the left-hand side of the penalty area before crossing to the far post where former Coventry striker Peter Ndlovu headed home in the 56th minute.

Walsall then had manager Colin Lee sent from the dug-out for arguing with the linesman.

Leeds United booked their place in the quarter-finals of the FA Cup thanks to another Harry Kewell belter against Crystal Palace. Kewell's cracking strike after 73 minutes gave his side a hard-fought 2-1 victory at Selhurst Park.

Gary Kelly's first goal for six years had given the visitors the lead with a quickly-taken free-kick in an action-packed first half, but Julian Gray replied two minutes later with a brilliant left-foot strike.

Then came a moment of controversy when Palace appeared to take the lead.

Tommy Black's shot looked to

have crossed the line but the linesman ruled that Michael Duberry had kept the ball out. The replay showed otherwise.

Palace enjoyed the better of things early in the second half but could not score and Kewell made them pay.

The Australian, who helped send England to defeat in mid-week, went past two defenders before lashing the ball home left-footed.

Palace threw everything at Leeds in the final moments, but the Premiership side defended well all afternoon with Duberry and Lucas Radebe rock solid.

Chelsea booked their place in the last eight for the eighth time in the last 12 years with a hard-earned 2-0 victory at Stoke.

The Blues, beaten finalists last year, had to endure some awkward moments in the first half as the two teams went into the interval still locked together at 0-0.

But Chelsea went ahead in the 51st minute through Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Sergei Shtaniuk's attempted clearance only fell at the feet of the Chelsea striker and he fired a shot beyond Steve Banks and into the corner.

Stoke still threatened to get back into the match but Chelsea killed them off with a second goal from substitute Jesper Gronkjaer 14 minutes from time.

Eidur Gudjohnsen fed Gronkjaer through down the right and from a narrow angle the Dane thundered a right-foot shot in off the near post.

Fulham failed to join their Premiership rivals in the last eight at the first time of asking as they were held to a 1-1 draw by Burnley.

Stan Ternent's men went in front as early as the fourth minute at Loftus Road.

Sean Davis, in last week's England squad, was the villain with a sloppy pass which gifted the Clarets possession and Alan Moore nipped in to score.

But their lead only lasted until just before half-time as Steed Malbranque smacked home the equaliser after Ian Cox had cleared the ball into his path.

Both sides had chances to win it in the second half, but they will have to try again at Turf Moor.

In Sunday's final game, Wolves' double act of George Ndah and Kenny Miller came up trumps again to kill off the challenge of plucky Third Division Rochdale 3-1.

Ndah had scored the winner against Newcastle and then the pair of them had both struck twice in the victory over Leicester in the previous round.

This time around Ndah delivered the opener and Miller scored the decisive second goal after Gavin Melaugh had levelled for Dale, who had beaten Preston and Coventry in earlier rounds.

For good measure substitute Adam Proudflock added a third for Wolves in injury-time.

WORLD



Spanish Primera Liga

Real Sociedad's title challenge was rocked by late drama on Sunday evening as they snatched defeat from the jaws of victory at Real Betis.

With their nearest challengers Real Madrid suffering a shock upset at Osasuna earlier in the day, the league leaders could have taken a giant stride towards claiming their first La Liga crown since 1982 with victory in Seville. And things looked to be going to plan as the impressive Kahveci Nihat netted twice in five second-half minutes to cancel out Fernandez Fernando's early opener for Betis.

But with the three points within their grasp disaster struck for Sociedad as first Julian Filipescu equalised in bizarre fashion with a bicycle kick with four minutes to go.

Fernando then netted his second of the match with a disputed injury-time penalty, awarded against Igor Jauregui who was then sent-off for protesting.

Star-studded Real Madrid slipped to a shock defeat at Osasuna on Sunday with Italian midfielder Christian Manfredini grabbing the crucial strike.

Javier Aguirre's team held on for three vital points after Manfredini had fired home his first Primera Liga goal after 37 minutes.

Real's hopes of getting back into the match suffered a blow when Portuguese ace Luis Figo was dismissed after 63

minutes. And the European champions, missing the leadership of injured captain Fernando Hierro, could find no way back. Celta Vigo made short work of bottom-of-the-table Recreativo Huelva at the Balaidos stadium with a 4-1 victory. Two goals each for Edu and Jesuli did the trick for the home side, who are trying to force their way into the Champions League next year.

The visitors' only consolation was a gift from Silvinho, who scored an own goal right at the death.

Alaves eased their relegation worries by putting the brakes on Villarreal's recent good run with a 1-0 home win.

The Basques have struggled against relegation candidates Racing Santander and Rayo Vallecano in recent weeks, while Villarreal claimed back-to-back wins against Valladolid and Osasuna. But Ivan Tomic's strike in the 77th minute was enough to earn the hosts a welcome three points on home turf. Athletic Bilbao ended a stressful week on a high after helping themselves to a 2-0 victory over Sevilla in San

Mames. The Lions had to wait until the second half to make the breakthrough with Joseba Etxeberria grabbing the opener and Santiago Ezquerro netting from the penalty spot to secure the points.

Joaquin Caparros' team ended the match with nine men following the sending-off of midfielder Fredi and defender David. Two first-half goals were enough to give Racing Santander the three points in their crucial battle with fellow strugglers Rayo Vallecano. Javi Guerrero put Racing ahead after 17 minutes and Yossi Benayoun doubled the lead on the half-hour mark.

Rayo, who started the game one point and one place below Racing in 18th position, had Jose Quevedo sent off after 52 minutes and with him went their hopes of getting back into the match. Valencia stayed hot on the heels of Real Madrid and Real Sociedad and firmly in pursuit of a second straight Spanish title with a convincing 2-0 triumph over Malaga on Saturday night.

Rafael Benitez, getting ready for the Champions League war with a game at Roma this week, was not punished for resting several of his key players.

Mauricio Pellegrino (59) and Juan Sanchez (75) scored second-half goals as the Mestalla Stadium outfit remained third - just two points behind Real Sociedad, who play Real Betis on Sunday, and level with Madrid. Red-hot Roy Makaay scored another match-winning goal to lift Deportivo La Coruna to a narrow 1-0 win at Valladolid.

Makaay, in the midst of his finest season, now has a Primera Liga best 16 goals, and 25 in all competitions after striking in the 57th minute. Valladolid threatened to score from as early as the seventh minute when Colsa saw his shot from the edge of the area crack against the post.

Other than that, there were no real clear cut chances in the opening period. Makaay broke the deadlock when Romero whipped in a dangerous cross from the left.

The Dutchman made a great run ahead of his marker and prodded home on the volley with his right foot.

It was another great goal to add to his impressive collection in an excellent season. Former Mallorca striker Alberto Luque came close twice to adding to Depor's advantage - hitting the post on two occasions - but they settled for the 1-0 victory in the end. Xavi Hernandez had a hand in both goals as Barcelona put their recent bad run of form behind them to beat Catalan rivals Espanyol 2-0.

Barca, who parted with coach Louis van Gaal at the end of January and replaced him with Raddy Antic, saw embattled president Joan Gaspart finally cave in to the pressure this week and resign.



Maxi Rodriguez of Espanyol struggles to hold off Xavi Hernandez, who scored Barcelona's second goal.

Espanyol 0-2 Barcelona, Valencia 2-0 Malaga, Valladolid 0-1 Deportivo La Coruna, Athletic Bilbao 2-0 Sevilla, Celta de Vigo 4-1 Recreativo Huelva, Deportivo Alaves 1-0 Villarreal, Osasuna 1-0 Real Madrid, Racing Santander 2-0 Rayo Vallecano, Atletico Madrid 2-1 Mallorca, Real Betis 3-2 Real Sociedad.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	22	12	8	2	38	27	44
Real Madrid	22	11	9	2	46	23	42
Valencia	22	12	6	4	36	17	42
D Coruna	22	11	6	5	31	25	39
Real Betis	22	10	6	6	35	30	36
Celta Vigo	22	11	3	8	28	20	36
Atletico Madrid	22	8	8	6	35	28	32
Athletic Bilbao	22	8	5	9	34	37	29
CD Alaves	22	7	7	8	27	33	28
Villarreal	22	7	7	8	22	24	28
Malaga	22	6	9	7	28	28	27
Mallorca	22	8	3	11	25	37	27
Osasuna	22	7	6	9	24	27	27
Valladolid	22	8	3	11	21	25	27
Barcelona	22	7	6	9	31	30	27
Sevilla	22	6	8	8	17	18	26
Racing Santander	22	8	2	12	26	29	26
Espanyol	22	6	4	12	24	33	22
Rayo Vallecano	22	6	4	12	22	32	22
Recreativo Huelva	22	3	6	13	18	45	15

He left with his club just two points above the relegation zone. The victory over Espanyol, the new regime can say, means that good times have arrived.

Whether or not they stay remains to be seen. What is not debatable is the impact that Xavi on the game on Saturday night. His cross was headed in by Phillip Cocu for the first on 39 minutes, and then Xavi himself scored just two minutes later to give Antic his first win.

For Espanyol, their recent run of five games without defeat has come to an end and coach Javier Clemente will have to work hard to boost his players who remain in the drop zone.

German Bundesliga

Bayern Munich went on a second-half rampage to swamp Munich rivals 1860 on Saturday while Bayer Leverkusen lost their game against Hansa Rostock to keep coach Klaus Toppmoller on thin ice.

After a goalless first half, Mehmet Scholl bagged a hat-trick in 22 minutes to inspire Bayern to a 5-0 victory that maintained their eight-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga. Bixente Lizarazu and Claudio Pizarro also weighed in with goals to ensure a miserable afternoon for 1860 fans, who had been expecting better following last week's great victory at Werder Bremen.

Rostock and their Togo striker Bachiro Salou may have brought down the curtain on the Toppmoller show in Leverkusen. Toppmoller reportedly went into the game needing to win to save his job with his men just a single point above the relegation zone.

Salou, who had only two goals in 14 previous appearances this season, struck 35 minutes into the game before Marko Babic's equaliser three minutes later.

Then four minutes before half-time, the 22-year-old netted his second and Rostock held on for a win.

After the match, Toppmoller said in his press conference that no decision on his status would be made on Saturday but it remains to be seen if he will be in charge for their next game. Leverkusen are fourth from bottom but could fall into the relegation zone on Sunday when third bottom Borussia Monchengladbach face Hertha Berlin.

Borussia Dortmund kept pace with Bayern by humbling Bochum 4-1 at the Westfalenstadion. The visitors went ahead when Delron Buckley struck in the eighth minute.



Mehmet Scholl celebrates scoring Bayern Munich's first goal.

But Giuseppe Reina levelled matters after 33 minutes and Jan Koller put the hosts ahead two minutes before half-time. Two second-half penalties by Torsten Frings completed the scoring.

Kaiserslautern took a valuable away point at Arminia Bielefeld to complete a sequence of three games without defeat. It could have been even better for Eric Gerets' strugglers as they took the lead with a Vratislav Lokvenc goal in the 27th minute. But they could only hold onto their advantage for eight minutes before Bastian Reinhardt struck to earn the home side a share of the spoils.

Relegation-threatened Nurnberg dented Werder Bremen's Champions League ambitions with a 1-0 win.

Fourth-placed Werder had hoped to get their European bid back on track but instead suffered their third straight defeat. Lars Muller netted the all-important winner three minutes before half-time and the hosts held on magnificently for the three crucial points to lift them clear of the drop zone. High-flying Stuttgart's four-match winning run came to a shuddering halt with a 2-0 reverse at Schalke.

Belgian midfielder Emile Mpenza fired the home side ahead as early as the third minute with striker Tomasz Hajto adding the second on the stroke of half-time.

Goals from Rodolfo Cardoso (38) and Collin Benjamin (90) saw Hamburg home to a 2-0 win against Wolfsburg who had Robson Ponte sent-off 10 minutes before the break and Tomislav red-carded a minute from time. The visitors finished the game with just eight men after Maik Franz went off injured and they had no substitutes left to bring on.

On Sunday, struggling Borussia Monchengladbach suffered another blow to their hopes of avoiding the drop when they slipped to a 2-0 home defeat to Hertha Berlin.

Alex Alves netted both goals for Hertha, firing home the opener after just nine minutes before doubling the lead five minutes later. Energie Cottbus moved off the bottom after stunning Hannover with three late goals.

Vragek Da Silva opened the scoring 16 minutes from time and dreams of a rare victory became even more vivid when Laurentius Reghecampf doubled Cottbus' lead just four minutes later. The points were sewn up eight minutes from time when Marko Topic fired home, before Hannover's humiliation was made complete by the sending-off of Fredi Bobic in the 89th minute.

Arminia Bielefeld 1-1 Kaiserslautern, Bayer Leverkusen 1-2 Hansa Rostock, Borussia Dortmund 4-1 Bochum, Hamburger SV 2-0 Wolfsburg, Munich 1860 0-5 Bayern Munich, Nurnberg 1-0 Werder Bremen, Schalke 2-0 Stuttgart, Energie Cottbus 3-0 Hannover, Monchengladbach 0-2 Hertha BSC.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	21	14	5	2	45	15	47
Borussia Dortmund	21	11	6	4	35	17	39
ViB Stuttgart	21	10	6	5	33	26	36
Schalke	21	9	8	4	29	21	35
Werder Bremen	21	10	4	7	37	33	34
Hamburg	21	9	6	6	27	26	33
Hertha Berlin	21	9	5	7	28	25	32
1860 Munich	21	9	4	8	31	32	31
VFL Bochum	21	8	5	8	37	36	29
Hansa Rostock	21	7	6	8	24	25	27
Wolfsburg	20	8	2	10	23	26	26
Arminia Bielefeld	21	6	7	8	24	29	25
Nurnberg	21	7	3	11	27	34	24
Hannover 96	21	6	5	10	29	40	23
Bayer Leverkusen	21	5	5	11	26	36	20
Cottbus	21	5	5	11	21	39	20
Borussia M'gladbach	20	5	4	11	20	26	19
FC Kaiserslautern	21	4	6	11	23	33	18

WORLD

Ethniki Katigoria

Panathinaikos maintained their two-point cushion at the top of the Ethniki Katigoria with a narrow 1-0 win at home to Ionikos. Nikos Liberopoulos' 48th-minute header proved decisive, and valuable, as rivals Olympiakos were hammering Akratitos 5-2 elsewhere.

A late refereeing decision at the Apostolos Nikolaidis stadium was just as significant, however, with the visitors having what appeared a perfectly good goal disallowed in the 92nd minute.

There was no such controversy across the city, despite Olympiakos falling behind to Christos Iliopoulos' fifth-minute opener for Akratitos.

Giovanni levelled four minutes before the break after Predrag Djordjevic's long pass, but the visitors had to wait until the 70th minute to nudge ahead when Giovanni headed in another Djordjevic centre.

Giovanni really was inspired and another piece of magic played in Peter Oforiwaye for his side's third goal three minutes later.

Nikos Iordanidis reduced the deficit six minutes later but Giovanni completed his hat-trick in sensational style nine minutes from time, running from the halfway line and beating four defenders before lobbing the ball into the back of the net. Alexis Alexandris completed the rout in the 87th minute after another Djordjevic assist. Ilija Ivic's injury-time goal edged AEK Athens home ahead of visiting Skoda Xanthi.

The hosts looked to have thrown away the points after letting a two-goal lead slip but Ivic held his nerve to keep them in contention for European football next season.

After a goalless first half, Vassilis Lakis fired AEK ahead two minutes after the restart before Christos Maladenis added a second a minute later.

Gunter Friesenbichler reduced the deficit from the penalty spot in the 67th minute and Frank Rabarivony looked to have earned a point two minutes later when he levelled from close range.

PAOK Thessaloniki kept pace with the leaders with a 2-0 win at home to OFI Crete. They were given the best possible start when Yiorgos Kutsis steered home a free-kick after just two minutes.

They were made to wait to wrap things up, however, Sladjan Spasic popping up in injury time with the second on his return after three months out injured. Kallithea earned themselves a valuable point at Proodeftiki, coming from behind to draw 1-1. Roland Zaimi put the home side ahead two minutes into the second half but they failed to press home their advantage and were made to pay.

Theofanis Gekas was the hero with a powerful header, although Kallithea thought they had won it in injury time when Yiannis Tatsis was denied by a great save.

Iraklis needed two late goals to finally see off Panionios.

Marcin Mieciel netted the opener before Stelios Chassiotis levelled with a powerful shot on the stroke of half-time that went in off the crossbar.

Edwin Murati restored the lead from close range 11 minutes from time and Ederson Fofonka made the game safe in the 88th minute after converting a rebound.

Aigaleo Athens ran out convincing 4-0 winners at home to Panahaiki to put further distance between themselves and the relegation places.

Kostas Papoutsis set the ball rolling in the sixth minute before Giannis Chloros doubled the advantage 11 minutes later.

The match was won four minutes after the restart when Nikos Nikolopoulos grabbed the third before the scoring was rounded off two minutes from time with Tasos Agritis' penalty.

Aigaleo Athens kept their hopes of European football alive with a 1-0 win at Giannina.

They left it late to take maximum points, Avraam Papadopoulos winning the game with a penalty a minute from time.

Egaleo Athens 4 - 0 Panahaiki Patras, Giannina 0 - 1 Aris Saloniki, PAOK Saloniki 2 - 0 OFI Crete, Proodeftiki 1 - 1 Kallithea, AEK Athens 3 - 2 Xanthi, Skoda, Iraklis Saloniki 3 - 1 Panionios, Akratitos 2 - 5 Olympiakos Piraeus, Panathinaikos 1 - 0 Ionikos Nikea.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	19	14	2	3	27	12	44
Olympiakos	19	12	6	1	45	13	42
PAOK	19	12	3	4	40	20	39
AEK	19	10	5	4	36	20	35
Panionios	19	10	4	5	23	15	34
Aris	19	9	5	5	21	20	32
Iraklis	19	8	4	7	26	21	28
Xanthi	19	6	8	5	22	17	26
OFI	19	6	6	7	22	21	24
Aigaleo	19	5	8	6	18	22	23
Proodeftiki	19	5	7	7	18	19	22
Kallithea	19	3	7	9	18	27	16
Ionikos	19	3	6	10	11	27	15
Giannina	19	3	5	11	14	25	14
Akratitos	19	3	3	13	17	41	12
Panahaiki	19	1	5	13	7	45	8

Dutch Eredivisie

Feyenoord blitzed AZ with four goals inside 31 first-half minutes to secure a comprehensive 4-1 victory. AZ were looking to bounce back from a humiliating 5-0 beating at the hands of Heerenveen but Feyenoord, currently third in the Eredivisie, signalled their intent early on.

Robin van Persie gave the visitors the lead after 13 minutes when he fired home from 20 yards after being teed up by Patrik Paauwe.

Pierre van Hooijdonk doubled Feyenoord's advantage just three minutes later with a powerful close-range header after Shinji Ono had floated across an accurate centre.

With AZ still reeling from that blow, Bonaventure Kalou put the game out of reach with a third, but the goal owed much to Van Hooijdonk, whose stinging free-kick was fumbled by AZ goalkeeper Oscar Moens. AZ rallied briefly but Van Hooijdonk soon completed the rout with a fourth after 31 minutes. Jan Kromkamp volleyed an Olaf Lindenbergh cross into the back of the Feyenoord net with eight minutes remaining but it was scant consolation for the outclassed hosts.

Willem II erased the 6-0 hammering by Ajax from their fans' memories with a 5-0 thumping of Roda. Since going down to Ronald Koeman's side in their last home game two weeks ago, Willem have won two out of two league games, banging in eight goals in the process.

Jatto Ceesay set them on their way against Roda with a goal in the 21st minute and James Quinn, Danny Landzaat and Dmitri Shoukov (two) joined him on the scoresheet. NAC Breda overcame the first-half sending off of Nebosja Gudelj to record a much-needed 2-1 victory over struggling Excelsior and keep their European hopes alive.

Orlando Engelaar gave the home side the perfect start after 21 minutes with a free-kick from just outside the penalty area, his shot deflecting off Alfred Schreuder and flying into the back of the net.

Pieter Collen's NAC debut lasted just 29 minutes before the recent signing from PSV Eindhoven had to leave field with an ankle injury.

Gudelj was shown the red card for foul and abusive language after 53 minutes following a clash with Leo Koswal to leave NAC with an uphill battle. They looked to be losing that battle after 73 minutes when Australian substitute Brett Holman levelled for Excelsior with a powerful drive from the edge of the penalty area.

But Schreuder netted the winner just four minutes later when he played a one-two with Engelaar and surged into the area before beating the goalkeeper from close range. On Sunday, Heerenveen piled the misery on relegation threatened De Graafschap after routing the hosts 5-1 on Sunday.

Arvid Smit gave the home side early hopes of a turnaround in fortunes when he scored the opening goal.

But thereafter the goals came the visitors way as a brace from Romano Denneboom sandwiched goals from John De Jong and Gerald Sibon with Stefan Selakovic landing the final blow. RKC bounced back from the disappointment of last weekend's defeat to PSV to claim a useful 1-0 home victory over Vitesse Arnhem. Patrick van Diemen's strike in the 42nd minute was enough to earn the three points.

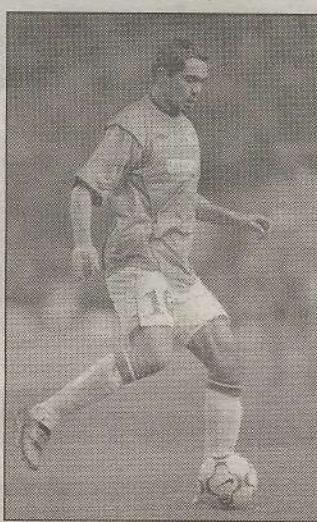
NEC goalkeeper Dennis Gentenaar set a new club record as his team held on for a narrow victory away at Twente, their first since 1986.

Gentenaar had gone 565 minutes without conceding a goal going into the game, needing to hold out for just a further six minutes to beat the mark set by Harry Schellekens in the 1970s.

And he did just that as first Danny Hesp, from the spot, and Youssouf Hersi fired the visitors ahead. Gentenaar's goal was finally breached in the 79th minute by Sjaak Polak, but it was too little too late for the hosts.



Aussie Youngster Brett Holman scored Excelsior's only goal in their two-one loss to NAC Breda.



Giovanni bagged a hat-trick in Olympiakos' five-two trouncing of Akratitos.

Belgian Eerste Klasse

Club Brugge continued their relentless march to the Jupiler League title with a convincing 4-2 victory over Standard Liege. The hosts took the lead in the 26th minute when Philippe Clement found Andres Mendoza who swept the ball home.

Mendoza was in the thick of the action four minutes later when he was hauled down in the area by Godwin Okpara for a penalty, allowing Timmy Simons to convert from the spot.

The hosts had clicked into gear by this point and added the third a minute later when Gaeten Englebert cut in from the right before crossing for Nastja Ceh who finished with a far post header.

The floodgates were temporarily shut within 60 seconds when Johan Walem played in Ole-Martin Aarst to reduce the deficit and end the scoring for the half.

Gert Verheyen netted the fourth after 50 minutes to wrap up the points although Harold Meyssen got his name on the scoresheet for Standard's second of the game in the 89th minute.

Lierse took full advantage of Anderlecht's rest day to move into second-place thanks to a 3-0 home win against Mechelen. The opening goal came in the 17th minute when Arouna Kone found Stein Huysegems who tipped the ball into an empty goal. Marc Schaessens' dangerous free-kick was headed in by Arouna Kone for the second midway through the second half and Karel Snoeck wrapped things up a minute from time.

Lokeren's European challenge was stalled after going down 2-1 at home to Beveren. The visitors went ahead in the 34th minute when goalkeeper Mladen Dabanic misjudged the ball allowing Constant Kipre Kaiper to score. The hosts looked to have stolen a point a minute from time when Sambegou Bangoura netted but their hopes were dashed within 60 seconds when Kaiper's cross flew over the keeper and into the top corner.

Sint-Truiden did enough to edge out Westerlo thanks to a 16th-minute volley by Danny Boffin after a swift counter-attack by Desire Mbonabuya.

Champions Genk also enjoyed a profitable evening with a 3-1 win at Mons. Kevin Vandenbergh fired them ahead in the 13th minute with a powerful strike only for Dimitri De Conde to level for the hosts three minutes before half-time. Substitute Moumouni Dagano restored the lead after 65 minutes before latching onto Koen Daerden's pass to grab his second and Genk's third a minute from the end.

Gent also won on their travels at Mons thanks to a 12th-minute header from Alexandros Kaklamanos. The hosts' cause wasn't helped by Dennis Souza De Guedes' 52nd-minute sending-off. Two goals in two first-half minutes earned Germinal Beerschot the points at home to La Louviere. Kwame Quansah was brought down in the box for a penalty in the 26th minute and Paul Kpaka made no mistake from the spot. He was given his second penalty when Alexandre Bryssinck was penalised for hand ball to kill off the visitors' hopes.

Anderlecht moved back into second place in the table after a comprehensive 4-1 defeat of Antwerp.

Nenad Jestrovic set them on the way after 14 minutes when Basnik Hasi's free-kick deflected off him and into the back of the net.

Hasi was also the architect for the second eight minutes later when his flighted free-kick was headed home by Hannu Tihinen.

Jestrovic added his second on the stroke of half-time and the game was as good as over.

Patrick Goots headed past Anderlecht goalkeeper Daniel Zitka in the 54th minute but it proved to be nothing more than a consolation as Jestrovic claimed a hat-trick by converting from the penalty spot after he had been felled in the box.

Charleroi gave their survival hopes a shot in the arm after a 5-0 thumping of Mouscron.

A second-half hat-trick from Jean-Paul Boeka-Lisasi was the highlight with Eduardo and Gregory Dufer pitching in with first-half efforts.

Club Brugge 4 - 2 Standard Liege, Germinal Beerschot 2 - 0 La Louviere, Lierse 3 - 0 Mechelen, Lokeren 1 - 2 Beveren, Lommel 1 - 3 Racing Genk, Mons-Bergen 0 - 1 AA Gent, Sint-Truiden 1 - 0 Westerlo, Anderlecht 4 - 1 Antwerp, Charleroi 5 - 0 Mouscron.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	21	19	1	1	70	18	58
Anderlecht	21	14	2	5	49	25	44
Lierse	21	13	5	3	38	19	44
St-Truidense	21	12	5	4	51	28	41
Lokeren	21	12	4	5	43	31	40
Genk	21	11	5	5	50	35	38
Gent	21	10	2	9	33	31	32
Standard Liege	21	8	6	7	35	29	30
Mons	21	9	3	9	31	26	30
Excelsior Mouscron	21	7	5	9	35	44	26
Antwerp	21	7	4	10	32	41	25
Beveren	21	7	2	12	26	50	23
Westerlo	21	7	1	13	18	35	22
Germinal	21	6	3	12	35	40	21
La Louviere	21	5	5	11	22	30	20
Lommel	21	4	3	14	19	39	15
Charleroi	21	3	6	12	26	48	15
KV Mechelen	21	2	4	15	15	59	10

WORLD

French Ligue 1

Sochaux claimed only their second away win of the season in Ligue 1 by sinking Nantes on their own patch. A goal by Jeremy Mathieu in the 54th minute was enough to propel Guy Lacombe's side four places up the table.

It was a classic smash-and-grab raid by Sochaux to steal victory.

Nantes came out in the first half with an attacking approach, while the visitors set their stall out to defend.

The hosts therefore had the best chances in the first period and were unlucky to go in at half-time without a lead.

Fortune deserted them when Viorel Moldovan's header scraped the woodwork in the 17th minute.

Then, in the 36th minute, Moldovan almost came up trumps again when he gambled on a weak back pass from Mathieu.

But, having got to the ball, Moldovan waited too long before shooting and Ibrahim Tall managed to get in a tackle.

Sochaux had a flurry of corners at the end of the half but failed to create anything that looked dangerous.

At the start of the second half, though, Mathieu delivered his sucker punch and stunned Nantes.

He was waiting on the right when Wilson Oruma left a pass from Benoit Pedretti for him.

Mathieu instinctively whacked the ball across Mickael Landreau into the far corner.

Afterwards, his side sat back again and saw out the game.

Nantes thought they had scored when Stephane Ziani put the ball into the empty net after Marama Vahirua had charged down Sochaux goalkeeper Teddy Richert's clearance, but the linesman flagged for offside.

And Nantes failed to seriously threaten an equaliser again in a disappointing second period.



Stephane Ziani (left) of Nantes under pressure from Sochaux's Jean-Jacques Domoraud.

Ajaccio 0 - 2 Marseille, Bordeaux 0 - 2 Bastia, Le Havre 2 - 1 Sedan, Lille 0 - 2 Lens, Lyon 0 - 0 Troyes, Nice 2 - 2 Sochaux, Paris S.G. 1 - 3 Montpellier, Rennes 0 - 0 Monaco, Strasbourg 3 - 1 Guingamp, Auxerre 0 - 1 Nantes.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marseille	27	14	6	7	30	23	48
Monaco	27	12	10	5	40	21	46
Nice	27	11	10	6	31	21	43
Auxerre	26	12	7	7	26	21	43
Lyon	27	11	9	7	43	32	42
Sochaux	26	11	8	7	28	22	41
Bastia	27	12	5	10	30	29	41
Bordeaux	26	11	7	8	37	28	40
PSG	27	10	9	8	33	25	39
Lens	26	9	11	6	31	26	38
Nantes	26	11	5	10	29	28	38
Guingamp	26	10	4	12	36	38	34
Strasbourg	26	9	7	10	30	37	34
Le Havre	27	8	8	11	21	30	32
Rennes	27	7	7	13	22	29	28
Lille	24	7	7	10	20	30	28
AC Ajaccio	26	6	9	11	20	31	27
Sedan	26	7	6	13	28	42	27
Montpellier	26	5	9	12	24	35	24
Troyes	26	4	8	14	15	26	20

Scottish League

An own goal off the head of Hearts midfielder Scott Severin enabled Rangers to extend their lead at the top of the Scottish Premier League to six points on a day when Celtic's trip to Motherwell had already fallen foul of the weather.

The unfortunate moment for the Scotland international, who had passed a late fitness test, proved significant on a day when the home side dominated but once again failed to turn that advantage into goals.

The recent history between the two sides had seen results go exclusively Rangers' way, with three victories accrued without the cost of a single goal.

In the end it had been Maybury who walked and the CIS Insurance Cup semi-final between the two sides earlier in the month, in which Hearts had been deeply disappointing when it came to creative football, Stephane Mahe and Fernando Ricksen had added another dimension to the McCann-Maybury bout on the other flank.

The home fans were upset in the 24th minute when the ball ended up in the Hearts goal from a Ronald de Boer tap-in.

Barry Ferguson had sent Caniggia through and the veteran had played the ball past on-coming goalkeeper Tepi Moilanen before he went down in the box from Maybury's challenge.

Initially it appeared to be a choice of whether a penalty would be awarded or advantage played but instead an assistant's raised flag prompted Underhill to penalise de Boer for offside.

But there was no escape for Hearts in the 41st minute after Maybury had fouled Caniggia on the left.

Mikel Arteta fired in the free-kick and the ball seemed to skid past Moilanen off the top of Severin's head.

Lorenzo Amoruso had been inches away from repeating his free-kick feat at Dunfermline last week but this time his low shot whistled just wide of the post.

But Hearts had also attacked their hosts, showing arguably more endeavour in the first 10 minutes than they had in the whole 90 earlier in the month.

Stefan Klos had not had much to do but when Jean-Louis Valois curled in a shot from 25 yards it needed a fine tip over to deny him.

Gary Wales had shown early promise and Mark de Vries had forced Klos into a near post save before Rangers got a grip on the game, with Caniggia heading across goal and the recalled Kevin Muscat failing to hit the target from a Ricksen lay back before the break.

Soon after the restart Michael Mols, who had been recalled at Shota Arveladze's expense, saw a shot deflected just wide after Arthur Numan had sprung the offside trap.

In the day's other game, a Stevie Crawford double allowed Dunfermline to notch up their second win over Hibernian at Easter Road this season in a 3-1 victory.

Barry Nicholson opened the scoring for the Pars before Crawford netted either side of the break.

Garry O'Connor pulled a goal back for Hibs but it was not enough to prevent 10-man Dunfermline taking all three points.

The only low point for the Pars was Ged Brannan's red card just before the interval.

As well as the game at Fir Park, Dundee's home clash with Livingston and Kilmarnock's match at home to Partick both fell foul of the freezing weather.

Steve Paterson recorded his first home win as Aberdeen manager and inflicted the first league defeat on new Dundee United boss Ian McCall as the Dons triumphed 3-0 at Pittodrie.

The up-and-coming managers' paths crossed many times in the lower divisions before they walked out on a Division One championship battle to take over at their new clubs.

McCall had an impressive record over Paterson in the past - including a 6-0 win last season.

But Paul Sheerin twice beat United keeper Paul Gallacher and a 74th minute header from Phil McGuire gave the home side the points against a dismal United.

Motherwell (PP) Celtic, FC Dundee (PP) Livingston, Hibernian 1 - 3 Dunfermline, Kilmarnock (PP) Partick Thistle, Rangers 1 - 0 Hearts, Aberdeen 3 - 0 Dundee United, Nantes 0 - 1 Sochaux.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	28	24	3	1	76	20	75
Celtic	27	22	3	2	69	17	69
Hearts	28	13	7	8	47	42	46
Dunfermline	27	12	3	12	43	49	39
Kilmarnock	27	11	6	10	31	39	39
Hibernian	27	10	4	13	38	43	34
Dundee	26	7	8	11	30	40	29
Partick	27	6	9	12	27	42	27
Aberdeen	28	6	9	13	25	42	27
Livingston	27	7	5	15	35	43	26
Motherwell	26	5	6	15	31	45	21
Dundee Utd	28	4	9	15	23	53	21

FIFA World Ranking

Rank:	Team:	Points:
1.	Brazil	856
2.	France	787
3.	Spain	780
4.	Germany	765
5.	Argentina	750
6.	Netherlands	746
7.	Turkey	736
8.	England	734
9.	Mexico	732
10.	United States	723
11.	Portugal	710
12.	Denmark	707
13.	Italy	705
14.	Ireland Republic	697
15.	Czech Republic	687
16.	Belgium	686
17.	Cameroon	684
18.	Paraguay	679
19.	Yugoslavia	677
20.	Korea Republic	669
21.	Costa Rica	651
22.	Japan	650
22.	Russia	650
24.	Sweden	649
25.	Norway	648
25.	Romania	648
27.	Senegal	647
28.	Uruguay	643
29.	Nigeria	642
30.	South Africa	636
31.	Ecuador	634
32.	Croatia	629
33.	Poland	628
34.	Iran	627
35.	Morocco	623
36.	Slovenia	620
37.	Colombia	617
38.	Saudi Arabia	612
39.	Egypt	596
40.	Honduras	591
41.	Tunisia	586
42.	Bulgaria	582
43.	Finland	580
44.	Switzerland	576
45.	Ukraine	574
46.	Israel	568
47.	Trinidad and Tobago	566
48.	Greece	563
49.	New Zealand	562
50.	Australia	557
51.	Jamaica	555
52.	Iraq	554
52.	Wales	554
54.	Thailand	545
55.	Austria	541
56.	Slovakia	535
57.	Zimbabwe	533
58.	Hungary	532
59.	Ghana	529
60.	Scotland	528

History In The Making For Socceroos



Australia 3 (Popovic 16', Kewell 42',
Emerton 83')
England 1 (Jeffers 67')